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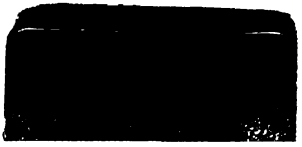

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THE WRITINGS OF

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTIONS
PORTRAITS, AND OTHER
ILLUSTRATIONS

IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES

VOLUME XIV

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The Writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe

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STORIES, SKETCHES AND STUDIES

BY

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introductory Note	vii
Uncle Lot	1
Love versus Law	32
The Tea Rose	74
Aunt Mary	82
Frankness	90
Cousin William	96
Mrs. A. and Mrs. B; or, What She Thinks about It	108
Which is the Liberal Man?	116
The Canal Boat	131
Feeling	139
The Seamstress	144
Old Father Morris: a Sketch from Nature	156
The Coral Ring	164
Art and Nature	176
The New Year's Gift	185
Our Wood Lot in Winter	198
The Mourning Veil	204
New England Ministers	218
Betty's Bright Idea	234
Deacon Pitkin's Farm.	
Chap. I. Miss Diana	254
II. Biah Carter	259
III. The Shadow	263
IV. The Good-by	269
V. Mother and Son	274
VI. Gone to Sea	278
VII. Thanksgiving again	284
The First Christmas of New England.	
Chap. I. In the Harbor of Cape Cod	294
II. The First Day on Shore	299
III. Christmas-Tide in Plymouth Harbor	305
IV. Elder Brewster's Christmas Sermon	312

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LITTLE FOXES.

CHAP. I. FAULT-FINDING 331
II. IRRITABILITY 345
III. REPRESSION 364
IV. PERSISTENCE 385
V. INTOLERANCE 407
VI. DISCOURTESY 428
VII. EXACTINGNESS 444

The frontispiece (MRS. STOWE in 1853) is after a crayon by Richmond.
The vignette (Mrs. Stowe's home at Cincinnati, Ohio) is from a drawing by Charles Copeland.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

In the early years of her married life, Mrs. Stowe was an industrious writer in spite of the numberless cares and distractions which stole away her leisure. Her husband was ambitious that she should win distinction by her pen, and the meagre returns which publication in journals brought her were very welcome, since they helped to eke out a most insufficient income. There was also in Cincinnati a literary society called The Semicolon, which made demands upon its members, of whom Mrs. Stowe was one, for papers, sketches, and poems. All these influences, added to a natural inclination to use her pen, made Mrs. Stowe an active littérateur, and in 1842, the Harpers brought out a collection of her stories and sketches under the title, *The Mayflower*. The book had a modest reception, and a short life, but after the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* it was worth while to revive it, and it was republished with revision and additions, in 1855, by Phillips and Sampson, who then had the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The book was introduced in these words: —

"Mr. G. B. Emerson, in his late report to the legislature of Massachusetts on the trees and shrubs of that State, thus describes the Mayflower: —

"'Often from beneath the edge of a snow bank are seen rising the fragrant pearly-white or rose-colored flowers of this earliest harbinger of spring. It abounds in the edges of the woods about Plymouth, as elsewhere, and must have been the first flower to salute the storm-beaten crew of the Mayflower on the conclusion of their first terrible winter.

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Their descendants have thence piously derived the name, although its bloom is often passed before the coming in of May.'

"No flower could be more appropriately selected as an emblem token by the descendants of the Puritans. Though so fragrant and graceful, it is invariably the product of the hardest and most rocky soils, and seems to draw its ethereal beauty of color and wealth of perfume rather from the air than from the slight hold which its rootlets take of the earth. It may often be found in fullest beauty matting a granite ledge, with scarcely any perceptible soil for its support. What better emblem of that faith and hope and piety by which our fathers were supported in dreary and barren enterprises, and which drew their life and fragrance from heaven more than earth?

"The Mayflower was, therefore, many years since selected by the author as the title of a series of New England sketches. That work had comparatively a limited circulation, and is now entirely out of print. Its articles are republished in the present volume, with other miscellaneous writings, which have from time to time appeared in different periodicals. They have been written in all moods, from the gayest to the gravest; they are connected, in many cases, with the memory of friends and scenes most dear.

"There are those now scattered through the world who will remember the social literary parties of Cincinnati, for whose genial meetings many of these articles were prepared. With most affectionate remembrances, the author dedicates the book to the yet surviving members of The Semicolon."

In this new and uniform edition of Mrs. Stowe's writing, it has seemed best not to preserve *The Mayflower* intact, but to distribute its contents among several groups, according to their nature. The present volume contains a considerable portion, included in the first sixteen articles. When *The Atlantic Monthly* was established, Mrs. Stowe

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was urged to be a regular contributor. She contributed *The Mourning Veil* to the first number, and, as is well known, published in the magazine several serials, and a few single articles, of which *New England Ministers* was one. Later in life, when she was especially identified with her brother's paper, *The Christian Union*, and its publishers J. B. Ford & Co., she published a little volume, in 1875, containing the next three stories. *Little Foxes* was one of the series published originally in *The Atlantic Monthly*, under the assumed name of Christopher Crowfield.

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STORIES, SKETCHES, AND STUDIES

UNCLE LOT

And so I am to write a story — but of what, and where? Shall it be radiant with the sky of Italy? or eloquent with the beau ideal of Greece? Shall it breathe odor and languor from the orient, or chivalry from the occident? or gayety from France? or vigor from England? No, no; these are all too old — too romance-like — too obviously picturesque for me. No; let me turn to my own land — my own New England; the land of bright fires and strong hearts; the land of deeds, and not of words; the land of fruits, and not of flowers; the land often spoken against, yet always respected; "the latchet of whose shoes the nations of the earth are not worthy to unloose."

Now, from this very heroic apostrophe, you may suppose that I have something very heroic to tell. By no means. It is merely a little introductory breeze of patriotism, such as occasionally brushes over every mind, bearing on its wings the remembrance of all we ever loved or cherished in the land of our early years; and if it should seem to be rodomontade to any people in other parts of the earth, let them only imagine it to be said about "Old Kentuck," old England, or any other corner of the world in which they happened to be born and they will find it quite rational.

But, as touching our story, it is time to begin. Did you ever see the little village of Newbury, in New England? I dare say you never did; for it was just one of those out-

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of-the-way places where nobody ever came unless they came on purpose: a green little hollow, wedged like a bird's nest between half a dozen high hills, that kept off the wind and kept out foreigners; so that the little place was as straitly *sui generis* as if there were not another in the world. The inhabitants were all of that respectable old standfast family who make it a point to be born, bred, married, to die, and be buried all in the selfsame spot. There were just so many houses, and just so many people lived in them; and nobody ever seemed to be sick, or to die either, at least while I was there. The natives grew old till they could not grow any older, and then they stood still, and *lasted* from generation to generation. There was, too, an unchangeability about all the externals of Newbury. Here was a red house, and there was a brown house, and across the way was a yellow house; and there was a straggling rail fence or a tribe of mullein stalks between. The minister lived here, and Squire Moses lived there, and Deacon Hart lived under the hill, and Messrs. Nadab and Abihu Peters lived by the cross-road, and the old "widder" Smith lived by the meeting-house, and Ebenezer Camp kept a shoemaker's shop on one side, and Patience Mosely kept a milliner's shop in front; and there was old Comfort Scran, who kept store for the whole town, and sold axeheads, brass thimbles, licorice balls, fancy handkerchiefs, and everything else you can think of. Here, too, was the general post-office, where you might see letters marvelously folded, directed wrong side upward, stamped with a thimble, and superscribed to some of the Dollys, or Pollys, or Peters, or Moseses aforenamed or not named.

For the rest, as to manners, morals, arts, and sciences, the people in Newbury always went to their parties at three o'clock in the afternoon, and came home before dark; always stopped all work the minute the sun was down on Saturday night; always went to meeting on Sunday; had a

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schoolhouse with all the ordinary inconveniences; were in neighborly charity with each other; read their Bibles, feared their God, and were content with such things as they had — the best philosophy, after all. Such was the place into which Master James Benton made an irruption in the year eighteen hundred and no matter what. Now, this James is to be our hero, and he is just the hero for a sensation — at least, so you would have thought, if you had been in Newbury the week after his arrival. Master James was one of those whole-hearted, energetic Yankees, who rise in the world as naturally as cork does in water. He possessed a great share of that characteristic national trait so happily denominated "cuteness," which signifies an ability to do everything without trying, and to know everything without learning, and to make more use of one's ignorance than other people do of their knowledge. This quality in James was mingled with an elasticity of animal spirits, a buoyant cheerfulness of mind, which, though found in the New England character, perhaps, as often as anywhere else, is not ordinarily regarded as one of its distinguishing traits.

As to the personal appearance of our hero, we have not much to say of it — not half so much as the girls in Newbury found it necessary to remark, the first Sabbath that he shone out in the meeting-house. There was a saucy frankness of countenance, a knowing roguery of eye, a joviality and prankishness of demeanor, that was wonderfully captivating, especially to the ladies.

It is true that Master James had an uncommonly comfortable opinion of himself, a full faith that there was nothing in creation that he could not learn and could not do; and this faith was maintained with an abounding and triumphant joyfulness, that fairly carried your sympathies along with him, and made you feel quite as much delighted with his qualifications and prospects as he felt himself. There are two kinds of self-sufficiency: one is amusing, and the

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other is provoking. His was the amusing kind. It seemed, in truth, to be only the buoyancy and overflow of a vivacious mind, delighted with everything delightful, in himself or others. He was always ready to magnify his own praise, but quite as ready to exalt his neighbor, if the channel of discourse ran that way: his own perfections being more completely within his knowledge, he rejoiced in them more constantly; but, if those of any one else came within the same range, he was quite as much astonished and edified as if they had been his own.

Master James, at the time of his transit to the town of Newbury, was only eighteen years of age; so that it was difficult to say which predominated in him most, the boy or the man. The belief that he could, and the determination that he would, be something in the world had caused him to abandon his home, and, with all his worldly effects tied in a blue cotton pocket-handkerchief, to proceed to seek his fortune in Newbury. And never did stranger in Yankee village rise to promotion with more unparalleled rapidity, or boast a greater plurality of employment. He figured as schoolmaster all the week, and as chorister on Sundays, and taught singing and reading in the evenings, besides studying Latin and Greek with the minister, nobody knew when; thus fitting for college, while he seemed to be doing everything else in the world besides.

James understood every art and craft of popularity, and made himself mightily at home in all the chimney-corners of the region round about; knew the geography of everybody's cider barrel and apple bin, helping himself and every one else therefrom with all bountifulness; rejoicing in the good things of this life, devouring the old ladies' doughnuts and pumpkin pies with most flattering appetite, and appearing equally to relish every body and thing that came in his way.

The degree and versatility of his acquirements were truly wonderful. He knew all about arithmetic and history, and

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all about catching squirrels and planting corn; made poetry and hoe-handles with equal celerity; wound yarn and took out grease spots for old ladies, and made nosegays and knick-knacks for young ones; caught trout Saturday afternoons, and discussed doctrines on Sundays, with equal adroitness and effect. In short, Mr. James moved on through the place

"Victorious,
Happy and glorious,"

welcomed and privileged by everybody in every place; and when he had told his last ghost story, and fairly flourished himself out of doors at the close of a long winter's evening, you might see the hard face of the good man of the house still phosphorescent with his departing radiance, and hear him exclaim, in a paroxysm of admiration, that "Jemeses talk re'ly did beat all; that he was sartainly most a miraculous cre'tur!"

It was wonderfully contrary to the buoyant activity of Master James's mind to keep a school. He had, moreover, so much of the boy and the rogue in his composition, that he could not be strict with the iniquities of the curly pates under his charge; and when he saw how determinately every little heart was boiling over with mischief and motion, he felt in his soul more disposed to join in and help them to a frolic than to lay justice to the line, as was meet. This would have made a sad case, had it not been that the activity of the master's mind communicated itself to his charge, just as the reaction of one brisk little spring will fill a manufactory with motion; so that there was more of an impulse towards study in the golden, good-natured day of James Benton than in the time of all that went before or came after him.

But when "school was out," James's spirits foamed over as naturally as a tumbler of soda water, and he could jump over benches and burst out of doors with as much rapture as the veriest little elf in his company. Then you might have seen him stepping homeward with a most felicitous expres-

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sion of countenance, occasionally reaching his hand through the fence for a bunch of currants, or over it after a flower, or bursting into some back yard to help an old lady empty her washtub, or stopping to pay his devoirs to Aunt This or Mistress That, for James well knew the importance of the "powers that be," and always kept the sunny side of the old ladies.

We shall not answer for James's general flirtations, which were sundry and manifold; for he had just the kindly heart that fell in love with everything in feminine shape that came in his way, and if he had not been blessed with an equal facility in falling out again, we do not know what ever would have become of him. But at length he came into an abiding captivity, and it is quite time that he should; for having devoted thus much space to the illustration of our hero, it is fit we should do something in behalf of our heroine; and, therefore, we must beg the reader's attention while we draw a diagram or two that will assist him in gaining a right idea of her.

Do you see yonder brown house, with its broad roof sloping almost to the ground on one side, and a great, unsupported sunbonnet of a piazza shooting out over the front door? You must often have noticed it; you have seen its tall wellsweep, relieved against the clear evening sky, or observed the feather beds and bolsters lounging out of its chamber windows on a still summer morning; you recollect its gate, that swung with a chain and a great stone; its pantry window, latticed with little brown slabs, and looking out upon a forest of beanpoles. You remember the zephyrs that used to play among its pea brush, and shake the long tassels of its corn patch, and how vainly any zephyr might essay to perform similar flirtations with the considerate cabbages that were solemnly vegetating near by. Then there was the whole neighborhood of purple-leaved beets and feathery parsnips; there were the billows of gooseberry

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bushes rolled up by the fence, interspersed with rows of quince-trees; and far off in one corner was one little patch, penuriously devoted to ornament, which flamed with marigolds, poppies, snappers, and four-o'clocks. Then there was a little box by itself with one rose geranium in it, which seemed to look around the garden as much like a stranger as a French dancing-master in a Yankee meeting-house.

That is the dwelling of Uncle Lot Griswold. Uncle Lot, as he was commonly called, had a character that a painter would sketch for its lights and contrasts rather than its symmetry. He was a chestnut burr, abounding with briers without and with substantial goodness within. He had the strong-grained practical sense, the calculating worldly wisdom of his class of people in New England; he had, too, a kindly heart; but all the strata of his character were crossed by a vein of surly petulance, that, halfway between joke and earnest, colored everything that he said and did.

If you asked a favor of Uncle Lot, he generally kept you arguing half an hour, to prove that you really needed it, and to tell you that he could not all the while be troubled with helping one body or another, all which time you might observe him regularly making his preparations to grant your request, and see, by an odd glimmer of his eye, that he was preparing to let you hear the "conclusion of the whole matter," which was, "Well, well — I guess — I 'll go, on the *hull* — I s'pose I must, at least;" so off he would go and work while the day lasted, and then wind up with a farewell exhortation "not to be a-callin' on your neighbors when you could get along without." If any of Uncle Lot's neighbors were in any trouble, he was always at hand to tell them that "they should n't 'a' done so;" that "it was strange they could n't had more sense;" and then to close his exhortations by laboring more diligently than any to bring them out of their difficulties, groaning in spirit, meanwhile, that folks would make people so much trouble.

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"Uncle Lot, father wants to know if you will lend him your hoe to-day," says a little boy, making his way across a cornfield.

"Why don't your father use his own hoe?"

"Ours is broke."

"Broke! How came it broke?"

"I broke it yesterday, trying to hit a squirrel."

"What business had you to be hittin' squirrels with a hoe? — say!"

"But father wants to borrow yours."

"Why don't you have that mended? It 's a great pester to have everybody usin' a body's things."

"Well, I can borrow one somewhere else, I suppose," says the suppliant. After the boy has stumbled across the ploughed ground, and is fairly over the fence, Uncle Lot calls, —

"Hallo, there, you little rascal! what are you goin' off without the hoe for?"

"I did n't know as you meant to lend it."

"I did n't say I would n't, did I? Here, come and take it — stay, I 'll bring it; and do tell your father not to be a-lettin' you hunt squirrels with his hoes next time."

Uncle Lot's household consisted of Aunt Sally, his wife, and an only son and daughter; the son, at the time our story begins, was at a neighboring literary institution. Aunt Sally was precisely as clever, as easy to be entreated, and kindly in externals, as her helpmate was the reverse. She was one of those respectable, pleasant old ladies whom you might often have met on the way to church on a Sunday, equipped with a great fan and a psalm-book, and carrying some dried orange peel or a stalk of fennel, to give to the children if they were sleepy in meeting. She was as cheerful and domestic as the teakettle that sung by her kitchen fire, and slipped along among Uncle Lot's angles and peculiarities as if there never was anything the matter

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in the world; and the same mantle of sunshine seemed to have fallen on Miss Grace, her only daughter.

Pretty in her person and pleasant in her ways, endowed with native self-possession and address, lively and chatty, having a mind and a will of her own, yet good-humored withal, Miss Grace was a universal favorite. It would have puzzled a city lady to understand how Grace, who never was out of Newbury in her life, knew the way to speak, and act, and behave, on all occasions, exactly as if she had been taught how. She was just one of those wild flowers which you may sometimes see waving its little head in the woods, and looking so civilized and garden-like, that you wonder if it really did come up and grow there by nature. She was an adept in all household concerns, and there was something amazingly pretty in her energetic way of bustling about, and "putting things to rights." Like most Yankee damsels, she had a longing after the tree of knowledge, and, having exhausted the literary fountains of a district school, she fell to reading whatsoever came in her way. True, she had but little to read; but what she perused she had her own thoughts upon, so that a person of information, in talking with her, would feel a constant wondering pleasure to find that she had so much more to say of this, that, and the other thing than he expected.

Uncle Lot, like every one else, felt the magical brightness of his daughter, and was delighted with her praises, as might be discerned by his often finding occasion to remark that "he did n't see why the boys need to be all the time a-comin' to see Grace, for she was nothing so extraor'nary, after all." About all matters and things at home she generally had her own way, while Uncle Lot would scold and give up with a regular good grace that was quite creditable.

"Father," says Grace, "I want to have a party next week."

"You sha'n't go to havin' your parties, Grace. I always

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have to eat bits and ends a fortnight after you have one, and I won't have it so." And so Uncle Lot walked out, and Aunt Sally and Miss Grace proceeded to make the cake and pies for the party.

When Uncle Lot came home, he saw a long array of pies and rows of cakes on the kitchen table.

"Grace — Grace — Grace, I say! What is all this here flummery for?"

"Why, it is to eat, father," said Grace, with a good-natured look of consciousness.

Uncle Lot tried his best to look sour; but his visage began to wax comical as he looked at his merry daughter; so he said nothing, but quietly sat down to his dinner.

"Father," said Grace, after dinner, "we shall want two more candlesticks next week."

"Why, can't you have your party with what you 've got?"

"No, father, we want two more."

"I can't afford it, Grace — there 's no sort of use on't — and you sha'n't have any."

"Oh, father, now do," said Grace.

"I won't, neither," said Uncle Lot, as he sallied out of the house, and took the road to Comfort Scran's store.

In half an hour he returned again; and fumbling in his pocket, and drawing forth a candlestick, leveled it at Grace.

"There 's your candlestick."

"But, father, I said I wanted two."

"Why, can't you make one do?"

"No, I can't; I must have two."

"Well, then, there 's t'other; and here 's a fol-de-rol for you to tie round your neck." So saying, he bolted for the door, and took himself off with all speed. It was much after this fashion that matters commonly went on in the brown house.

But having tarried long on the way, we must proceed with the main story.

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James thought Miss Grace was a glorious girl; and as to what Miss Grace thought of Master James, perhaps it would not have been developed had she not been called to stand on the defensive for him with Uncle Lot. For, from the time that the whole village of Newbury began to be wholly given unto the praise of Master James, Uncle Lot set his face as a flint against him — from the laudable fear of following the multitude. He therefore made conscience of stoutly gainsaying everything that was said in his behalf, which, as James was in high favor with Aunt Sally, he had frequent opportunities to do.

So when Miss Grace perceived that Uncle Lot did not like our hero as much as he ought to do, she, of course, was bound to like him well enough to make up for it. Certain it is that they were remarkably happy in finding opportunities of being acquainted; that James waited on her, as a matter of course, from singing-school; that he volunteered making a new box for her geranium on an improved plan; and above all, that he was remarkably particular in his attentions to Aunt Sally — a stroke of policy which showed that James had a natural genius for this sort of matters. Even when emerging from the meeting-house in full glory, with flute and psalm-book under his arm, he would stop to ask her how she did; and if 't was cold weather, he would carry her foot-stove all the way home from meeting, discoursing upon the sermon and other serious matters, as Aunt Sally observed, "in the pleasantest, prettiest way that ever ye see." This flute was one of the crying sins of James in the eyes of Uncle Lot. James was particularly fond of it, because he had learned to play on it by intuition; and on the decease of the old pitchpipe, which was slain by a fall from the gallery, he took the liberty to introduce the flute in its place. For this and other sins, and for the good reasons above named, Uncle Lot's countenance was not towards James, neither could he be moved to him-ward by any manner of means.

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To all Aunt Sally's good words and kind speeches, he had only to say that "he did n't like him; that he hated to see him a-manifesting and glorifying there in the front gallery Sundays, and a-acting everywhere as if he was master of all: he did n't like it and he would n't." But our hero was no whit cast down or discomfited by the malcontent aspect of Uncle Lot. On the contrary, when report was made to him of divers of his hard speeches, he only shrugged his shoulders, with a very satisfied air, and remarked that "he knew a thing or two for all that."

"Why, James," said his companion and chief counselor, "do you think Grace likes you?"

"I don't know," said our hero, with a comfortable appearance of certainty.

"But you can't get her, James, if Uncle Lot is cross about it."

"Fudge! I can make Uncle Lot like me if I have a mind to try."

"Well then, Jim, you 'll have to give up that flute of yours, I tell you now."

"Fa, sol, la — I can make him like me and my flute too."

"Why, how will you do it?"

"Oh, I 'll work it," said our hero.

"Well, Jim, I tell you now, you don't know Uncle Lot if you say so: for he is just the *settest* crittur in his way that ever you saw."

"I do know Uncle Lot, though, better than most folks; he is no more cross than I am; and as to his being set, you have nothing to do but make him think he is in his own way when he is in yours — that is all."

"Well," said the other, "but you see I don't believe it."

"And I 'll bet you a gray squirrel that I 'll go there this very evening, and get him to like me and my flute both," said James.

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Accordingly the late sunshine of that afternoon shone full on the yellow buttons of James as he proceeded to the place of conflict. It was a bright, beautiful evening. A thunder-storm had just cleared away, and the silver clouds lay rolled up in masses around the setting sun; the raindrops were sparkling and winking to each other over the ends of the leaves, and all the bluebirds and robins, breaking forth into song, made the little green valley as merry as a musical box.

James's soul was always overflowing with that kind of poetry which consists in feeling unspeakably happy; and it is not to be wondered at, considering where he was going, that he should feel in a double ecstasy on the present occasion. He stepped gayly along, occasionally springing over a fence to the right to see whether the rain had swollen the trout brook, or to the left to notice the ripening of Mr. Somebody's watermelons — for James always had an eye on all his neighbors' matters as well as his own.

In this way he proceeded till he arrived at the picket fence that marked the commencement of Uncle Lot's ground. Here he stopped to consider. Just then four or five sheep walked up, and began also to consider a loose picket, which was hanging just ready to drop off; and James began to look at the sheep. "Well, mister," said he, as he observed the leader judiciously drawing himself through the gap, "in with you — just what I wanted;" and having waited a moment to ascertain that all the company were likely to follow, he ran with all haste towards the house, and swinging open the gate, pressed all breathless to the door.

"Uncle Lot, there are four or five sheep in your garden!" Uncle Lot dropped his whetstone and scythe.

"I 'll drive them out," said our hero; and with that, he ran down the garden alley, and made a furious descent on the enemy; bestirring himself, as Bunyan says, "lustily

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and with good courage," till every sheep had skipped out much quicker than it skipped in; and then, springing over the fence, he seized a great stone, and nailed on the picket so effectually that no sheep could possibly encourage the hope of getting in again. This was all the work of a minute, and he was back again; but so exceedingly out of breath that it was necessary for him to stop a moment and rest himself. Uncle Lot looked ungraciously satisfied.

"What under the canopy set you to scampering so?" said he; "I could 'a' driv out them critturs myself."

"If you are at all particular about driving them out yourself, I can let them in again," said James.

Uncle Lot looked at him with an odd sort of twinkle in the corner of his eye.

"'Spose I must ask you to walk in," said he.

"Much obliged," said James; "but I am in a great hurry." So saying, he started in very business-like fashion towards the gate.

"You 'd better jest stop a minute."

"Can't stay a minute."

"I don't see what possesses you to be all the while in sich in hurry; a body would think you had all creation on your shoulders."

"Just my situation, Uncle Lot," said James, swinging open the gate.

"Well, at any rate, have a drink of cider, can't ye?" said Uncle Lot, who was now quite engaged to have his own way in the case.

James found it convenient to accept this invitation, and Uncle Lot was twice as good-natured as if he had stayed in the first of the matter.

Once fairly forced into the premises, James thought fit to forget his long walk and excess of business, especially as about that moment Aunt Sally and Miss Grace returned from an afternoon call. You may be sure that the last

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thing these respectable ladies looked for was to find Uncle Lot and Master James tête-à-tête, over a pitcher of cider; and when, as they entered, our hero looked up with something of a mischievous air, Miss Grace in particular was so puzzled that it took her at least a quarter of an hour to untie her bonnet strings. But James stayed, and acted the agreeable to perfection. First, he must needs go down into the garden to look at Uncle Lot's wonderful cabbages, and then he promenaded all around the corn patch, stopping every few moments and looking up with an appearance of great gratification, as if he had never seen such corn in his life; and then he examined Uncle Lot's favorite apple-tree with an expression of wonderful interest.

"I never!" he broke forth, having stationed himself against the fence opposite to it; "what kind of an apple-tree is that?"

"It 's a bellflower, or somethin' another," said Uncle Lot.

"Why, where did you get it? I never saw such apples!" said our hero, with his eyes still fixed on the tree.

Uncle Lot pulled up a stalk or two of weeds, and threw them over the fence, just to show that he did not care anything about the matter; and then he came up and stood by James.

"Nothin' so remarkable, as I know on," said he.

Just then Grace came to say that supper was ready. Once seated at table, it was astonishing to see the perfect and smiling assurance with which our hero continued his addresses to Uncle Lot. It sometimes goes a great way towards making people like us to take it for granted that they do already; and upon this principle James proceeded. He talked, laughed, told stories, and joked with the most fearless assurance, occasionally seconding his words by looking Uncle Lot in the face, with a countenance so full of good will as would have melted any snowdrift of prejudices in the world.

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James also had one natural accomplishment, more courtier-like than all the diplomacy in Europe, and that was the gift of feeling a *real* interest for anybody in five minutes; so that, if he began to please in jest, he generally ended in earnest. With great simplicity of mind, he had a natural tact for seeing into others, and watched their motions with the same delight with which a child gazes at the wheels and springs of a watch, to "see what it will do."

The rough exterior and latent kindness of Uncle Lot were quite a spirit-stirring study; and when tea was over, as he and Grace happened to be standing together in the front door, he broke forth, —

"I do really like your father, Grace!"

"Do you?" said Grace.

"Yes, I do. He has something in him, and I like him all the better for having to fish it out."

"Well, I hope you will make him like you," said Grace unconsciously; and then she stopped, and looked a little ashamed.

James was too well bred to see this, or look as if Grace meant any more than she said, — a kind of breeding not always attendant on more fashionable polish, — so he only answered, —

"I think I shall, Grace, though I doubt whether I can get him to own it."

"He is the kindest man that ever was," said Grace; "and he always acts as if he was ashamed of it."

James turned a little away, and looked at the bright evening sky, which was glowing like a calm, golden sea; and over it was the silver new moon, with one little star to hold the candle for her. He shook some bright drops off from a rosebush near by, and watched to see them shine as they fell, while Grace stood very quietly waiting for him to speak again.

"Grace," said he at last, "I am going to college this fall."

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"So you told me yesterday," said Grace.

James stooped down over Grace's geranium, and began to busy himself with pulling off all the dead leaves, remarking in the mean while, —

"And if I do get him to like me, Grace, will you like me too?"

"I like you now very well," said Grace.

"Come, Grace, you know what I mean," said James, looking steadfastly at the top of the apple-tree.

"Well, I wish, then, you would understand what I mean without my saying any more about it," said Grace.

"Oh, to be sure I will!" said our hero, looking up with a very intelligent air; and so, as Aunt Sally would say, the matter was settled, with "no words about it."

Now shall we narrate how our hero, as he saw Uncle Lot approaching the door, had the impudence to take out his flute, and put the parts together, arranging and adjusting the stops with great composure?

"Uncle Lot," said he, looking up, "this is the best flute that ever I saw."

"I hate them tooting critturs," said Uncle Lot snappishly.

"I declare! I wonder how you can," said James; "for I do think they exceed" —

So saying, he put the flute to his mouth, and ran up and down a long flourish.

"There! what do you think of that?" said he, looking in Uncle Lot's face with much delight.

Uncle Lot turned and marched into the house, but soon faced to the right-about, and came out again, for James was fingering "Yankee Doodle" — that appropriate national air for the descendants of the Puritans.

Uncle Lot's patriotism began to bestir itself; and now, if it had been anything, as he said, but "that 'ere flute" — As it was, he looked more than once at James's fingers.

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"How under the sun could you learn to do that?" said he.

"Oh, it's easy enough," said James, proceeding with another tune; and, having played it through, he stopped a moment to examine the joints of his flute, and in the mean time addressed Uncle Lot: "You can't think how grand this is for pitching tunes — I always pitch the tunes on Sunday with it."

"Yes; but I don't think it's a right and fit instrument for the Lord's house," said Uncle Lot.

"Why not? It is only a kind of a long pitchpipe, you see," said James; "and, seeing the old one is broken, and this will answer, I don't see why it is not better than nothing."

"Why, yes, it may be better than nothing," said Uncle Lot; "but, as I always tell Grace and my wife, it ain't the right kind of instrument, after all; it ain't solemn."

"Solemn!" said James; "that is according as you work it: see here, now."

So saying, he struck up Old Hundred, and proceeded through it with great perseverance.

"There, now!" said he.

"Well, well, I don't know but it is," said Uncle Lot; "but as I said at first, I don't like the look of it in meetin'."

"But yet you really think it is better than nothing," said James, "for you see I could n't pitch my tunes without it."

"Maybe 't is," said Uncle Lot; "but that is n't sayin' much."

This, however, was enough for Master James, who soon after departed, with his flute in his pocket, and Grace's last words in his heart; soliloquizing as he shut the gate, "There, now, I hope Aunt Sally won't go to praising me; for, just so sure as she does, I shall have it all to do over again."

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James was right in his apprehension. Uncle Lot could be privately converted, but not brought to open confession; and when, the next morning, Aunt Sally remarked, in the kindness of her heart, —

"Well, I always knew you would come to like James," Uncle Lot only responded, "Who said I did like him?"

"But I 'm sure you seemed to like him last night."

"Why, I could n't turn him out o' doors, could I? I don't think nothin' of him but what I always did."

But it was to be remarked that Uncle Lot contented himself at this time with the mere general avowal, without running it into particulars, as was formerly his wont. It was evident that the ice had begun to melt, but it might have been a long time in dissolving, had not collateral incidents assisted.

It so happened that about this time George Griswold, the only son before referred to, returned to his native village, after having completed his theological studies at a neighboring institution. It is interesting to mark the gradual development of mind and heart, from the time that the white-headed, bashful boy quits the country village for college, to the period when he returns, a formed and matured man; to notice how gradually the rust of early prejudices begins to cleave from him — how his opinions, like his handwriting, pass from the cramped and limited forms of a country school into that confirmed and characteristic style which is to mark the man for life. In George this change was remarkably striking. He was endowed by nature with uncommon acuteness of feeling and fondness for reflection — qualities as likely as any to render a child backward and uninteresting in early life.

When he left Newbury for college, he was a taciturn and apparently phlegmatic boy, only evincing sensibility by blushing and looking particularly stupefied whenever anybody spoke to him. Vacation after vacation passed, and

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he returned more and more an altered being; and he who once shrank from the eye of the deacon, and was ready to sink if he met the minister, now moved about among the dignitaries of the place with all the composure of a superior being.

It was only to be regretted that, while the mind improved, the physical energies declined, and that every visit to his home found him paler, thinner, and less prepared in body for the sacred profession to which he had devoted himself. But now he was returned, a minister — a real minister, with a right to stand in the pulpit and preach; and what a joy and glory to Aunt Sally — and to Uncle Lot, if he were not ashamed to own it!

The first Sunday after he came, it was known far and near that George Griswold was to preach; and never was a more ready and expectant audience.

As the time for reading the first psalm approached, you might see the white-headed men turning their faces attentively towards the pulpit; the anxious and expectant old women, with their little black bonnets, bent forward to see him rise. There were the children looking, because everybody else looked; there was Uncle Lot in the front pew, his face considerately adjusted; there was Aunt Sally, seeming as pleased as a mother could seem; and Miss Grace, lifting her sweet face to her brother, like a flower to the sun; there was our friend James in the front gallery, his joyous countenance a little touched with sobriety and expectation; in short, a more embarrassingly attentive audience never greeted the first effort of a young minister. Under these circumstances there was something touching in the fervent self-forgetfulness which characterized the first exercises of the morning — something which moved every one in the house.

The devout poetry of his prayer, rich with the Orientalism of Scripture, and eloquent with the expression of strong

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yet chastened emotion, breathed over his audience like music, hushing every one to silence, and beguiling every one to feeling. In the sermon, there was the strong intellectual nerve, the constant occurrence of argument and statement, which distinguishes a New England discourse; but it was touched with life by the intense, yet half-subdued, feeling with which he seemed to utter it. Like the rays of the sun, it enlightened and melted at the same moment.

The strong peculiarities of New England doctrine, involving, as they do, all the hidden machinery of mind, all the mystery of its divine relations and future progression, and all the tremendous uncertainties of its eternal good or ill, seemed to have dwelt in his mind, to have burned in his thoughts, to have wrestled with his powers, and they gave to his manner the fervency almost of another world; while the exceeding paleness of his countenance, and a tremulousness of voice that seemed to spring from bodily weakness, touched the strong workings of his mind with a pathetic interest, as if the being so early absorbed in another world could not be long for this.

When the services were over, the congregation dispersed with the air of people who had felt rather than heard; and all the criticism that followed was similar to that of old Deacon Hart, — an upright, shrewd man, — who, as he lingered a moment at the church door, turned and gazed with unwonted feeling at the young preacher.

"He 's a blessed cre'tur!" said he, the tears actually making their way to his eyes; "I hain't been so near heaven this many a day. He 's a blessed cre'tur of the Lord; that 's my mind about him!"

As for our friend James, he was at first sobered, then deeply moved, and at last wholly absorbed by the discourse; and it was only when meeting was over that he began to think where he really was.

With all his versatile activity, James had a greater depth

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of mental capacity than he was himself aware of, and he began to feel a sort of electric affinity for the mind that had touched him in a way so new; and when he saw the mild minister standing at the foot of the pulpit stairs, he made directly towards him.

"I do want to hear more from you," said he, with a face full of earnestness; "may I walk home with you?"

"It is a long and warm walk," said George, smiling.

"Oh, I don't care for that, if it does not trouble *you*," said James; and leave being gained, you might have seen them slowly passing along under the trees, James pouring forth all the floods of inquiry which the sudden impulse of his mind had brought out, and supplying his guide with more questions and problems for solution than he could have gone through with in a month.

"I cannot answer all your questions now," said he, as they stopped at Uncle Lot's gate.

"Well, then, when will you?" said James eagerly. "Let me come home with you to-night?"

The minister smiled assent, and James departed, so full of new thoughts that he passed Grace without even seeing her. From that time a friendship commenced between the two which was a beautiful illustration of the affinities of opposites. It was like a friendship between morning and evening — all freshness and sunshine on one side, and all gentleness and peace on the other.

The young minister, worn by long-continued ill health, by the fervency of his own feelings, and the gravity of his own reasonings, found pleasure in the healthful buoyancy of a youthful, unexhausted mind, while James felt himself sobered and made better by the moonlight tranquillity of his friend. It is one mark of a superior mind to understand and be influenced by the superiority of others; and this was the case with James. The ascendancy which his new friend acquired over him was unlimited, and did more in a month towards

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consolidating and developing his character than all the four years' course of a college. Our religious habits are likely always to retain the impression of the first seal which stamped them, and in this case it was a peculiarly happy one. The calmness, the settled purpose, the mild devotion of his friend, formed a just alloy to the energetic and reckless buoyancy of James's character, and awakened in him a set of feelings without which the most vigorous mind must be incomplete.

The effect of the ministrations of the young pastor, in awakening attention to the subjects of his calling in the village, was marked, and of a kind which brought pleasure to his own heart. But, like all other excitement, it tends to exhaustion, and it was not long before he sensibly felt the decline of the powers of life. To the best regulated mind there is something bitter in the relinquishment of projects for which we have been long and laboriously preparing, and there is something far more bitter in crossing the long-cherished expectations of friends. All this George felt. He could not bear to look on his mother, hanging on his words and following his steps with eyes of almost childish delight — on his singular father, whose whole earthly ambition was bound up in his success, and think how soon the "candle of their old age" must be put out. When he returned from a successful effort, it was painful to see the old man, so evidently delighted, and so anxious to conceal his triumph, as he would seat himself in his chair, and begin with, "George, that 'ere doctrine is rather of a puzzler; but you seem to think you 've got the run on't. I should re'ly like to know what business you have to think you know better than other folks about it;" and, though he would cavil most courageously at all George's explanations, yet you might perceive, through all, that he was inly uplifted to hear how his boy could talk.

If George was engaged in argument with any one else, he would sit by, with his head bowed down, looking out from under his shaggy eyebrows with a shamefaced satisfaction

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very unusual with him. Expressions of affection from the naturally gentle are not half so touching as those which are forced out from the hard-favored and severe; and George was affected, even to pain, by the evident pride and regard of his father.

"He never said so much to anybody before," thought he, "and what will he do if I die?"

In such thoughts as these Grace found her brother engaged one still autumn morning, as he stood leaning against the garden fence.

"What are you solemnizing here for, this bright day, brother George?" said she, as she bounded down the alley.

The young man turned, and looked on her happy face with a sort of twilight smile.

"How happy you are, Grace!" said he.

"To be sure I am; and you ought to be too, because you are better."

"I am happy, Grace — that is, I hope I shall be."

"You are sick, I know you are," said Grace; "you look worn out. Oh, I wish your heart could *spring* once, as mine does."

"I am not well, dear Grace, and I fear I never shall be," said he, turning away, and fixing his eyes on the fading trees opposite.

"Oh George! dear George, don't, don't say *that*, you 'll break all our hearts," said Grace, with tears in her own eyes.

"Yes, but it is *true*, sister: I do not feel it on my own account so much as — However," he added, "it will all be the same in heaven."

It was but a week after this that a violent cold hastened the progress of debility into a confirmed malady. He sunk very fast. Aunt Sally, with the self-deceit of a fond and cheerful heart, thought every day that "he *would* be bet-

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ter," and Uncle Lot resisted conviction with all the obstinate pertinacity of his character, while the sick man felt that he had not the heart to undeceive them.

James was now at the house every day, exhausting all his energy and invention in the case of his friend; and any one who had seen him in his hours of recklessness and glee, could scarcely recognize him as the being whose step was so careful, whose eye so watchful, whose voice and touch were so gentle, as he moved around the sick-bed. But the same quickness which makes a mind buoyant in gladness often makes it gentlest and most sympathetic in sorrow.

It was now nearly morning in the sick-room. George had been restless and feverish all night; but towards day he fell into a slight slumber, and James sat by his side, almost holding his breath lest he should waken him. It was yet dusk, but the sky was brightening with a solemn glow, and the stars were beginning to disappear; all, save the bright and morning one, which, standing alone in the east, looked tenderly through the casement, like the eye of our Heavenly Father, watching over us when all earthly friendships are fading.

George awoke with a placid expression of countenance, and fixing his eyes on the brightening sky, murmured faintly, —

> "The sweet, immortal morning sheds
> Its blushes round the spheres."

A moment after, a shade passed over his face; he pressed his fingers over his eyes, and the tears dropped silently on his pillow.

"George! *dear* George!" said James, bending over him.

"It 's my friends — it 's my father — my mother," said he faintly.

"Jesus Christ will watch over them," said James soothingly.

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"Oh, yes, I know He will; for *He* loved his own which were in the world; He loved them unto the end. But I am dying — and before I have done any good."

"Oh, do not say so," said James; "think, think what you have done, if only for *me*. God bless you for it! God *will* bless you for it; it will follow you to heaven; it will bring me there. Yes, I will do as you have taught me. I will give my life, my soul, my whole strength to it; and then you will not have lived in vain."

George smiled, and looked upward; "his face was as that of an angel;" and James, in his warmth, continued, —

"It is not I alone who can say this; we all bless you; every one in his place blesses you; you will be had in everlasting remembrance by some hearts here, I know."

"Bless God!" said George.

"We do," said James. "I bless him that I ever knew you; we all bless him, and we love you, and shall forever."

The glow that had kindled over the pale face of the invalid again faded as he said, —

"But, James, I must — I ought to — tell my father and mother; I ought to, and how can I?"

At that moment the door opened, and Uncle Lot made his appearance. He seemed struck with the paleness of George's face; and coming to the side of the bed, he felt his pulse, and laid his hand anxiously on his forehead, and, clearing his voice several times, inquired "if he did n't feel a little better."

"No, father," said George; then taking his hand, he looked anxiously in his face, and seemed to hesitate a moment. "Father," he began, "you know that we ought to submit to God."

There was something in his expression at this moment which flashed the truth into the old man's mind. He dropped his son's hand with an exclamation of agony, and, turning quickly, left the room.

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"Father! father!" said Grace, trying to rouse him, as he stood with his arms folded by the kitchen window.

"Get away, child!" said he roughly.

"Father, mother says breakfast is ready."

"I don't want any breakfast," said he, turning short about. "Sally, what are you fixing in that 'ere porringer?"

"Oh, it 's only a little tea for George; 't will comfort him up, and make him feel better, poor fellow."

"You won't make him feel better — he 's gone," said Uncle Lot hoarsely.

"Oh, dear heart, no!" said Aunt Sally.

"Be still a-contradicting me; I won't be contradicted all the time by nobody. The short of the case is, that George is goin' to die just as we 've got him ready to be a minister and all; and I wish to pity I was in my grave myself, and so"— said Uncle Lot, as he plunged out of the door, and shut it after him.

It is well for a man that there is one Being who sees the suffering heart as it is, and not as it manifests itself through the repellances of outward infirmity, and who, perhaps, feels more for the stern and wayward than for those whose gentler feelings win for them human sympathy. With all his singularities, there was in the heart of Uncle Lot a depth of religious sincerity; but there are few characters where religion does anything more than struggle with natural defect, and modify what would else be far worse.

In this hour of trial, all the native obstinacy and pertinacity of the old man's character rose, and while he felt the necessity of submission, it seemed impossible to submit; and thus reproaching himself, struggling in vain to repress the murmurs of nature, repulsing from him all external sympathy, his mind was "tempest-tossed, and not comforted."

It was on the still afternoon of the following Sabbath that he was sent for, in haste, to the chamber of his son.

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He entered, and saw that the hour was come. The family were all there. Grace and James, side by side, bent over the dying one, and his mother sat afar off, with her face hid in her apron, "that she might not see the death of the child." The aged minister was there, and the Bible lay open before him. The father walked to the side of the bed. He stood still, and gazed on the face now brightening with "life and immortality." The son lifted up his eyes; he saw his father, smiled, and put out his hand.

"I am glad you are come," said he.

"O George, to the pity, don't! don't smile on me so! I know what is coming; I have tried, and tried, and I can't, I can't have it so; " and his frame shook, and he sobbed audibly. The room was still as death; there was none that seemed able to comfort him. At last the son repeated, in a sweet, but interrupted voice, those words of man's best Friend: "Let not your heart be troubled; in my Father's house are many mansions."

"Yes; but I can't help being troubled; I suppose the Lord's will must be done, but it 'll kill me."

"O father, don't, don't break my heart," said the son, much agitated. "I shall see you again in heaven, and you shall see me again; and then 'your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.'"

"I never shall get to heaven if I feel as I do now," said the old man. "I cannot have it so."

The mild face of the sufferer was overcast. "I wish he saw all that I do," said he, in a low voice. Then looking towards the minister, he articulated, "Pray for us."

They knelt in prayer. It was soothing, as real prayer always must be; and when they rose, every one seemed more calm. But the sufferer was exhausted; his countenance changed; he looked on his friends; there was a faint whisper, "Peace I leave with you" — and he was in heaven.

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We need not dwell on what followed. The seed sown by the righteous often blossoms over their grave; and so was it with this good man. The words of peace which he spoke unto his friends while he was yet with them came into remembrance after he was gone; and though he was laid in the grave with many tears, yet it was with softened and submissive hearts.

"The Lord bless him," said Uncle Lot, as he and James were standing, last of all, over the grave. "I believe my heart is gone to heaven with him; and I think the Lord really did know what was best after all."

Our friend James seemed now to become the support of the family; and the bereaved old man unconsciously began to transfer to him the affections that had been left vacant.

"James," said he to him one day, "I suppose you know that you are about the same to me as a son."

"I hope so," said James kindly.

"Well, well, you 'll go to college next week, and none o' y'r keepin' school to get along. I've got enough to bring you safe out — that is, if you 'll be car'ful and stiddy."

James knew the heart too well to refuse a favor in which the poor old man's mind was comforting itself. He had the self-command to abstain from any extraordinary expressions of gratitude, but took it kindly, as a matter of course.

"Dear Grace," said he to her, the last evening before he left home, "I am changed; we both are altered since we first knew each other; and now I am going to be gone a long time, but I am sure" —

He stopped to arrange his thoughts.

"Yes, you may be sure of all those things that you wish to say, and cannot," said Grace.

"Thank you," said James; then, looking thoughtfully, he added, "God help me. I believe I have mind enough to be what I mean to; but whatever I am or have shall be given to God and my fellow men; and then, Grace, your brother in heaven will rejoice over me."

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"I believe he does now," said Grace. "God bless you, James; I don't know what would have become of us if you had not been here.

"Yes, you will live to be like him, and to do even more good," she added, her face brightening as she spoke, till James thought she really must be right.

. . . . . .

It was five years after this that James was spoken of as an eloquent and successful minister in the state of C., and was settled in one of its most thriving villages. Late one autumn evening, a tall, bony, hard-favored man was observed making his way into the outskirts of the place.

"Hallo, there!" he called to a man over the other side of a fence; "what town is these 'ere?"

"It 's Farmington, sir."

"Well, I want to know if you know anything of a boy of mine that lives here?"

"A boy of yours? Who?"

"Why, I 've got a boy here, that 's livin' on the town, and I thought I 'd jest look him up."

"I don't know any boy that is living on the town. What 's his name?"

"Why," said the old man, pushing his hat off from his forehead, "I believe they call him James Benton."

"James Benton! Why, that is our minister's name!"

"Oh, wal, I believe he is the minister, come to think on't. He 's a boy o' mine, though. Where does he live?"

"In that white house that you see set back from the road there, with all those trees round it."

At this instant a tall, manly-looking person approached from behind. Have we not seen that face before? It is a touch graver than of old, and its lines have a more thoughtful significance; but all the vivacity of James Benton sparkles in that quick smile as his eye falls on the old man.

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"I thought you could not keep away from us long," said he with the prompt cheerfulness of his boyhood, and laying hold of both of Uncle Lot's hard hands.

They approached the gate; a bright face glances past the window, and in a moment Grace is at the door.

"Father! dear father!"

"You'd better make believe be so glad," said Uncle Lot, his eyes glistening as he spoke.

"Come, come, father, I have authority in these days," said Grace, drawing him towards the house; "so no disrespectful speeches; away with your hat and coat, and sit down in this great chair."

"So, ho! Miss Grace," said Uncle Lot, "you are at your old tricks, ordering round as usual. Well, if I must, I must;" so down he sat.

"Father," said Grace, as he was leaving them, after a few days' stay, "it's Thanksgiving Day next month, and you and mother must come and stay with us."

Accordingly, the following month found Aunt Sally and Uncle Lot by the minister's fireside, delighted witnesses of the Thanksgiving presents which a willing people were pouring in; and the next day they had once more the pleasure of seeing a son of theirs in the sacred desk, and hearing a sermon that everybody said was "the best that he ever preached;" and it is to be remarked, that this was the standing commentary on all James's discourses, so that it was evident he was going on unto perfection.

"There's a great deal that's worth having in this 'ere life after all," said Uncle Lot, as he sat by the coals of the bright evening fire of that day; "that is, if we'd only take it when the Lord lays it in our way."

"Yes," said James; "and let us only take it as we should and this life will be cheerfulness, and the next fullness of joy."

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LOVE VERSUS LAW

How many kinds of beauty there are! How many even in the human form! There are the bloom and motion of childhood, the freshness and ripe perfection of youth, the dignity of manhood, the softness of woman — all different, yet each in its kind perfect.

But there is none so peculiar, none that bears more the image of the heavenly, than the beauty of Christian old age. It is like the loveliness of those calm autumn days, when the heats of summer are past, when the harvest is gathered into the garner, and the sun shines over the placid fields and fading woods, which stand waiting for their last change. It is a beauty more strictly moral, more belonging to the soul, than that of any other period of life. Poetic fiction always paints the old man as a Christian; nor is there any period where the virtues of Christianity seem to find a more harmonious development. The aged man, who has outlived the hurry of passion — who has withstood the urgency of temptation — who has concentrated the religious impulses of youth into habits of obedience and love — who, having served his generation by the will of God, now leans in helplessness on Him whom once he served, is, perhaps, one of the most faultless representations of the beauty of holiness that this world affords.

Thoughts something like these arose in my mind as I slowly turned my footsteps from the graveyard of my native village, where I had been wandering after years of absence. It was a lovely spot — a soft slope of ground close by a little stream, that ran sparkling through the cedars and junipers

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beyond it, while on the other side arose a green hill, with the white village laid like a necklace of pearls upon its bosom.

There is no feature of the landscape more picturesque and peculiar than that of the graveyard, — that "city of the silent," as it is beautifully expressed by the Orientals, — standing amid the bloom and rejoicing of nature, its white stones glittering in the sun, a memorial of decay, a link between the living and the dead.

As I moved slowly from mound to mound, and read the inscriptions, which purported that many a money-saving man, and many a busy, anxious housewife, and many a prattling, half-blossomed child, had done with care or mirth, I was struck with a plain slab, bearing the inscription, "*To the memory of Deacon Enos Dudley, who died in his hundredth year.*" My eye was caught by this inscription, for in other years I had well known the person it recorded. At this instant, his mild and venerable form arose before me as erst it used to rise from the deacon's seat, a straight, close slip just below the pulpit. I recollect his quiet and lowly coming into meeting, precisely ten minutes before the time, every Sunday, — his tall form a little stooping, — his best suit of butternut-colored Sunday clothes, with long flaps and wide cuffs, on one of which two pins were always to be seen stuck in with the most reverent precision. When seated, the top of the pew came just to his chin, so that his silvery, placid head rose above it like the moon above the horizon. His head was one that might have been sketched for a St. John — bald at the top and around the temples adorned with a soft flow of bright fine hair, —

> "That down his shoulders reverently spread,
> As hoary frost with spangles doth attire
> The naked branches of an oak half dead."

He was then of great age, and every line of his patient face

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seemed to say, "And now, Lord, what wait I for?" Yet still, year after year, was he to be seen in the same place, with the same dutiful punctuality.

The services he offered to his God were all given with the exactness of an ancient Israelite. No words could have persuaded him of the propriety of meditating when the choir was singing, or of sitting down, even through infirmity, before the close of the longest prayer that ever was offered. A mighty contrast was he to his fellow officer, Deacon Abrams, a tight, little, tripping, well-to-do man, who used to sit beside him with his hair brushed straight up like a little blaze, his coat buttoned up trig and close, his psalm-book in hand, and his quick gray eyes turned first on one side of the broad aisle, and then on the other, and then up into the gallery, like a man who came to church on business, and felt responsible for everything that was going on in the house.

A great hindrance was the business talent of this good little man to the enjoyments of us youngsters, who, perched along in a row on a low seat in front of the pulpit, attempted occasionally to diversify the long hour of sermon by sundry small exercises of our own, such as making our handkerchiefs into rabbits, or exhibiting, in a sly way, the apples and gingerbread we had brought for a Sunday dinner, or pulling the ears of some discreet meeting-going dog, who now and then would soberly pitapat through the broad aisle. But woe be to us during our contraband sports, if we saw Deacon Abrams's sleek head dodging up from behind the top of the deacon's seat. Instantly all the apples, gingerbread, and handkerchiefs vanished, and we all sat with our hands folded, looking as demure as if we understood every word of the sermon, and more too.

There was a great contrast between these two deacons in their services and prayers, when, as was often the case, the absence of the pastor devolved on them the burden of con-

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ducting the duties of the sanctuary. That God was great and good, and that we all were sinners, were truths that seemed to have melted into the heart of Deacon Enos, so that his very soul and spirit were bowed down with them. With Deacon Abrams it was an undisputed fact, which he had settled long ago, and concerning which he felt that there could be no reasonable doubt, and his bustling way of dealing with the matter seemed to say that he knew *that* and a great many things besides.

Deacon Enos was known far and near as a very proverb for peacefulness of demeanor and unbounded charitableness in covering and excusing the faults of others. As long as there was any doubt in a case of alleged evil doing, Deacon Enos guessed "the man did not mean any harm, after all;" and when transgression became too barefaced for this excuse, he always guessed "it wa'n't best to say much about it; nobody could tell what they might be left to."

Some incidents in his life will show more clearly these traits. A certain shrewd landholder, by the name of Jones, who was not well reported of in the matter of honesty, sold to Deacon Enos a valuable lot of land, and received the money for it; but, under various pretenses, deferred giving the deed. Soon after, he died; and, to the deacon's amazement, the deed was nowhere to be found, while this very lot of land was left by will to one of his daughters.

The deacon said "it was very extraor'nary: he always knew that Seth Jones was considerable sharp about money, but he did not think he would do such a right up-and-down wicked thing." So the old man repaired to Squire Abel to state the case, and see if there was any redress. "I kinder hate to tell of it," said he; "but, Squire Abel, you know Mr. Jones was — was — what he was, even if he is dead and gone!" This was the nearest approach the old gentleman could make to specifying a heavy charge against the dead. On being told that the case admitted of no redress,

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Deacon Enos comforted himself with half soliloquizing, — "Well, at any rate, the land has gone to those two girls, poor lone critters; I hope it will do them some good. There is Silence — we won't say much about her; but Sukey is a nice, pretty girl." And so the old man departed, leaving it as his opinion that, since the matter could not be mended, it was just as well not to say anything about it.

Now, the two girls here mentioned (to wit, Silence and Sukey) were the eldest and the youngest of a numerous family, the offspring of three wives of Seth Jones, of whom these two were the sole survivors. The elder, Silence, was a tall, strong, black-eyed, hard-featured woman, verging upon forty, with a good, loud, resolute voice, and what the Irishman would call "a dacent notion of using it." Why she was called Silence was a standing problem to the neighborhood; for she had more faculty and inclination for making a noise than any person in the whole township. Miss Silence was one of those persons who have no disposition to yield any of their own rights. She marched up to all controverted matters, faced down all opposition, held her way lustily and with good courage, making men, women, and children turn out for her, as they would for a mail stage. So evident was her innate determination to be free and independent that, though she was the daughter of a rich man, and well portioned, only one swain was ever heard of who ventured to solicit her hand in marriage; and he was sent off with the assurance that, if he ever showed his face about the house again, she would set the dogs on him.

But Susan Jones was as different from her sister as the little graceful convolvulus from the great rough stick that supports it. At the time of which we speak she was just eighteen; a modest, slender, blushing girl, as timid and shrinking as her sister was bold and hardy. Indeed, the education of poor Susan had cost Miss Silence much painstaking and trouble, and, after all, she said "the girl would

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make a fool of herself; she never could teach her to be up and down with people, as she was."

When the report came to Miss Silence's ears that Deacon Enos considered himself as aggrieved by her father's will, she held forth upon the subject with great strength of courage and of lungs. "Deacon Enos might be in better business than in trying to cheat orphans out of their rights — she hoped he would go to law about it, and see what good he would get by it — a pretty church member and deacon, to be sure! getting up such a story about her poor father, dead and gone!

"But, Silence," said Susan, "Deacon Enos is a good man: I do not think he means to injure any one; there must be some mistake about it."

"Susan, you are a little fool, as I have always told you," replied Silence; "you would be cheated out of your eye teeth if you had not me to take care of you."

But subsequent events brought the affairs of these two damsels in closer connection with those of Deacon Enos, as we shall proceed to show.

It happened that the next-door neighbor of Deacon Enos was a certain old farmer, whose crabbedness of demeanor had procured for him the name of Uncle Jaw. This agreeable surname accorded very well with the general characteristics both of the person and manner of its possessor. He was tall and hard-favored, with an expression of countenance much resembling a northeast rainstorm — a drizzling, settled sulkiness, that seemed to defy all prospect of clearing off, and to take comfort in its own disagreeableness. His voice seemed to have taken lessons of his face, in such admirable keeping was its sawing, deliberate growl with the pleasing physiognomy before indicated. By nature he was endowed with one of those active, acute, hair-splitting minds, which can raise forty questions for dispute on any point of the compass; and had he been an educated man,

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he might have proved as clever a metaphysician as ever threw dust in the eyes of succeeding generations. But being deprived of these advantages, he nevertheless exerted himself to quite as useful a purpose in puzzling and mystifying whomsoever came in his way. But his activity particularly exercised itself in the line of the law, as it was his meat, and drink, and daily meditation, either to find something to go to law about or to go to law about something he had found. There was always some question about an old rail fence that used to run "a leetle more to the left hand," or that was built up "a leetle more to the right hand," and so cut off a strip of his "medder land," or else there was some outrage of Peter Somebody's turkeys getting into his mowing, or Squire Moses's geese were to be shut up in the town pound, or something equally important kept him busy from year's end to year's end. Now, as a matter of private amusement, this might have answered very well; but then Uncle Jaw was not satisfied to fight his own battles, but must needs go from house to house, narrating the whole length and breadth of the case, with all the "says he's" and "says I's," and the "I tell'd him's" and "he tell'd me's," which do either accompany or flow therefrom. Moreover, he had such a marvelous facility of finding out matters to quarrel about, and of letting every one else know where they, too, could muster a quarrel, that he generally succeeded in keeping the whole neighborhood by the ears.

And as good Deacon Enos assumed the office of peacemaker for the village, Uncle Jaw's efficiency rendered it no sinecure. The deacon always followed the steps of Uncle Jaw, smoothing, hushing up, and putting matters aright with an assiduity that was truly wonderful.

Uncle Jaw himself had a great respect for the good man, and, in common with all the neighborhood, sought unto him for counsel, though, like other seekers of advice, he appropriated only so much as seemed good in his own eyes.

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Still he took a kind of pleasure in dropping in of an evening to Deacon Enos's fire, to recount the various matters which he had taken or was to take in hand; at one time to narrate "how he had been over the milldam, telling old Granny Clark that she could get the law of Seth Scran about that pasture lot," or else "how he had told Ziah Bacon's widow that she had a right to shut up Bill Scranton's pig every time she caught him in front of her house."

But the grand "matter of matters," and the one that took up the most of Uncle Jaw's spare time, lay in a dispute between him and Squire Jones, the father of Susan and Silence; for it so happened that his lands and those of Uncle Jaw were contiguous. Now, the matter of dispute was on this wise: On Squire Jones's land there was a mill, which mill Uncle Jaw averred was "always a-flooding his medder land." As Uncle Jaw's "medder land" was by nature half bog and bulrushes, and therefore liable to be found in a wet condition, there was always a happy obscurity as to where the water came from, and whether there was at any time more there than belonged to his share. So, when all other subject matters of dispute failed, Uncle Jaw recreated himself with getting up a lawsuit about his "medder land;" and one of these cases was in pendency when, by the death of the squire, the estate was left to Susan and Silence, his daughters. When, therefore, the report reached him that Deacon Enos had been cheated out of his dues, Uncle Jaw prepared forthwith to go and compare notes. Therefore, one evening, as Deacon Enos was sitting quietly by the fire, musing and reading with his big Bible open before him, he heard the premonitory symptoms of a visitation from Uncle Jaw on his door-scraper; and soon the man made his appearance. After seating himself directly in front of the fire, with his elbows on his knees, and his hands spread out over the coals, he looked up in Deacon Enos's mild face with his little inquisitive gray eyes, and remarked,

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by way of opening the subject, "Well, deacon, old Squire Jones is gone at last. I wonder how much good all his land will do him now?"

"Yes," replied Deacon Enos, "it just shows how all these things are not worth striving after. We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."

"Why, yes," replied Uncle Jaw, "that's all very right, deacon; but it was strange how that old Squire Jones did hang on to things. Now, that mill of his, that was always soaking off water into these medders of mine — I took and tell'd Squire Jones just how it was, pretty nigh twenty times, and yet he would keep it just so; and now he's dead and gone, there is that old gal Silence is full as bad, and makes more noise; and she and Suke have got the land; but, you see, I mean to work it yet."

Here Uncle Jaw paused to see whether he had produced any sympathetic excitement in Deacon Enos; but the old man sat without the least emotion, quietly contemplating the top of the long kitchen shovel. Uncle Jaw fidgeted in his chair, and changed his mode of attack for one more direct. "I heard 'em tell, Deacon Enos, that the squire served you something of an unhandy sort of trick about that 'ere lot of land."

Still Deacon Enos made no reply; but Uncle Jaw's perseverance was not so to be put off, and he recommenced. "'Squire Abel, you see, he tell'd me how the matter was, and he said he did not see as it could be mended; but I took and tell'd him, ''Squire Abel,' says I, 'I 'd bet pretty nigh 'most anything, if Deacon Enos would tell the matter to me, that I could find a hole for him to creep out at; for,' says I, 'I 've seen daylight through more twistical cases than that afore now.'"

Still Deacon Enos remained mute; and Uncle Jaw, after waiting a while, recommenced with, "But, railly, deacon, I should like to hear the particulars."

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"I have made up my mind not to say anything more about that business," said Deacon Enos, in a tone which, though mild, was so exceedingly definite that Uncle Jaw felt that the case was hopeless in that quarter; he therefore betook himself to the statement of his own grievances.

"Why, you see, deacon," he began, at the same time taking the tongs, and picking up all the little brands, and disposing them in the middle of the fire, — "you see, two days arter the funeral (for I did n't railly like to go any sooner), I stepped up to hash over the matter with old Silence; for as to Sukey, she ha'n't no more to do with such things than our white kitten. Now, you see, Squire Jones, just afore he died, he took away an old rail fence of his'n that lay between his land and mine, and began to build a new stone wall; and when I come to measure, I found he had took and put a'most the whole width of the stone wall on to my land, when there ought not to have been more than half of it come there. Now, you see, I could not say a word to Squire Jones, because, jest before I found it out, he took and died; and so I thought I 'd speak to old Silence, and see if she meant to do anything about it, 'cause I knew pretty well she would n't; and I tell you, if she did n't put it on to me! We had a regular pitched battle — the old gal, I thought she would 'a' screamed herself to death! I don't know but she would, but just then poor Sukey came in, and looked so frightened and scarey — Sukey is a pretty gal, and looks so trembling and delicate, that it 's kinder a shame to plague her, and so I took and come away for that time."

Here Uncle Jaw perceived a brightening in the face of the good deacon, and felt exceedingly comforted that at last he was about to interest him in his story.

But all this while the deacon had been in a profound meditation concerning the ways and means of putting a stop to a quarrel that had been his torment from time immemo-

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rial, and just at this moment a plan had struck his mind which our story will proceed to unfold.

The mode of settling differences which had occurred to the good man was one which has been considered a specific in reconciling contending sovereigns and states from early antiquity, and the deacon hoped it might have a pacifying influence even in so unpromising a case as that of Miss Silence and Uncle Jaw.

In former days, Deacon Enos had kept the district school for several successive winters, and among his scholars was the gentle Susan Jones, then a plump, rosy little girl, with blue eyes, curly hair, and the sweetest disposition in the world. There was also little Joseph Adams, the only son of Uncle Jaw, a fine, healthy, robust boy, who used to spell the longest words, make the best snowballs and poplar whistles, and read the loudest and fastest in the "Columbian Orator" of any boy at school.

Little Joe inherited all his father's sharpness, with a double share of good humor; so that, though he was forever effervescing in the way of one funny trick or another, he was a universal favorite, not only with the deacon, but with the whole school.

Master Joseph always took little Susan Jones under his especial protection, drew her to school on his sled, helped her out with all the long sums in her arithmetic, saw to it that nobody pillaged her dinner basket, or knocked down her bonnet, and resolutely whipped or snowballed any other boy who attempted the same gallantries. Years passed on, and Uncle Jaw had sent his son to college. He sent him because, as he said, he had "a right to send him; just as good a right as Squire Abel or Deacon Abrams to send their boys, and so he would send him." It was the remembrance of his old favorite Joseph, and his little pet Susan, that came across the mind of Deacon Enos, and which seemed to open a gleam of light in regard to the future.

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So, when Uncle Jaw had finished his prelection, the deacon, after some meditation, came out with, "Railly, they say that your son is going to have the valedictory in college."

Though somewhat startled at the abrupt transition, Uncle Jaw found the suggestion too flattering to his pride to be dropped; so, with a countenance grimly expressive of his satisfaction, he replied, "Why, yes — yes — I don't see no reason why a poor man's son ha'n't as much right as any one to be at the top, if he can get there."

"Just so," replied Deacon Enos.

"He was always the boy for larning, and for nothing else," continued Uncle Jaw; "put him to farming, could n't make nothing of him. If I set him to hoeing corn or hilling potatoes, I 'd always find him stopping to chase hop-toads, or off after chip-squirrels. But set him down to a book, and there he was! That boy larnt reading the quickest of any boy that ever I saw: it was n't a month after he began his *a-b abs*, before he could read in the 'Fox and the Brambles,' and in a month more he could clatter off his chapter in the Testament as fast as any of them; and you see, in college, it 's jest so — he has ris right up to be first."

"And he is coming home week after next," said the deacon meditatively.

The next morning, as Deacon Enos was eating his breakfast, he quietly remarked to his wife, "Sally, I believe it was week after next you were meaning to have your quilting?"

"Why, I never told you so: what alive makes you think that, Deacon Dudley?"

"I thought that was your calculation," said the good man quietly.

"Why, no; to be sure, I *can* have it, and maybe it 's the best of any time, if we can get Black Dinah to come and help about the cakes and pies. I guess we will, finally."

"I think it 's likely you had better," replied the deacon, "and we will have all the young folks here."

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And now let us pass over all the intermediate pounding, and grinding, and chopping, which for the next week foretold approaching festivity in the kitchen of the deacon. Let us forbear to provoke the appetite of a hungry reader by setting in order before him the mince pies, the cranberry tarts, the pumpkin pies, the doughnuts, the cookies, and other sweet cakes of every description, that sprang into being at the magic touch of Black Dinah, the village priestess on all these solemnities. Suffice it to say that the day had arrived, and the auspicious quilt was spread.

The invitation had not failed to include the Misses Silence and Susan Jones — nay, the good deacon had pressed gallantry into the matter so far as to be the bearer of the message himself; for which he was duly rewarded by a broadside from Miss Silence, giving him what she termed a piece of her mind in the matter of the rights of widows and orphans; to all which the good old man listened with great benignity from the beginning to the end, and replied with, — "Well, well, Miss Silence, I expect you will think better of this before long; there had best not be any hard words about it." So saying, he took up his hat and walked off, while Miss Silence, who felt extremely relieved by having blown off steam, declared that "it was of no more use to hector old Deacon Enos than to fire a gun at a bag of cotton wool. For all that, though, she should n't go to the quilting; nor more should Susan."

"But, sister, why not?" said the little maiden; "I think I *shall* go." And Susan said this in a tone so mildly positive that Silence was amazed.

"What upon 'arth ails you, Susan?" said she, opening her eyes with astonishment; "have n't you any more spirit than to go to Deacon Enos's when he is doing all he can to ruin us?"

"I like Deacon Enos," replied Susan; "he was always kind to me when I was a little girl, and I am not going to believe that he is a bad man now."

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When a young lady states that she is not going to believe a thing, good judges of human nature generally give up the case; but Miss Silence, to whom the language of opposition and argument was entirely new, could scarcely give her ears credit for veracity in the case; she therefore repeated over exactly what she said before, only in a much louder tone of voice, and with much more vehement forms of asseveration — a mode of reasoning which, if not strictly logical, has at least the sanction of very respectable authorities among the enlightened and learned.

"Silence," replied Susan, when the storm had spent itself, "if it did not look like being angry with Deacon Enos, I would stay away to oblige you; but it would seem to every one to be taking sides in a quarrel, and I never did, and never will, have any part or lot in such things."

"Then you 'll just be trod and trampled on all your days, Susan," replied Silence; "but, however, if *you* choose to make a fool of yourself, I don't;" and so saying, she flounced out of the room in great wrath. It so happened, however, that Miss Silence was one of those who have so little economy in disposing of a fit of anger, that it was all used up before the time of execution arrived. It followed of consequence that, having unburdened her mind freely both to Deacon Enos and to Susan, she began to feel very much more comfortable and good-natured; and consequent upon that came divers reflections upon the many gossiping opportunities and comforts of a quilting; and then the intrusive little reflection, "What if she should go, after all; what harm would be done?" and then the inquiry, "Whether it was not her duty to go and look after Susan, poor child, who had no mother to watch over her?" In short, before the time of preparation arrived, Miss Silence had fully worked herself up to the magnanimous determination of going to the quilting. Accordingly, the next day, while

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Susan was standing before her mirror, braiding up her pretty hair, she was startled by the apparition of Miss Silence coming into the room as stiff as a changeable silk and a high horn comb could make her; and "grimly determined was her look."

"Well, Susan," said she, "if you will go to the quilting this afternoon, I think it is my duty to go and see to you."

What would people do if this convenient shelter of duty did not afford them a retreat in cases when they are disposed to change their minds? Susan suppressed the arch smile that, in spite of herself, laughed out at the corners of her eyes, and told her sister that she was much obliged to her for her care. So off they went together. Silence in the mean time held forth largely on the importance of standing up for one's rights, and not letting one's self be trampled on. The afternoon passed on, the elderly ladies quilted and talked scandal, and the younger ones discussed the merits of the various beaux who were expected to give vivacity to the evening entertainment. Among these the newly arrived Joseph Adams, just from college, with all his literary honors thick about him, became a prominent subject of conversation. It was duly canvassed whether the young gentleman might be called handsome, and the affirmative was carried by a large majority, although there were some variations and exceptions; one of the party declaring his whiskers to be in too high a state of cultivation, another maintaining that they were in the exact line of beauty, while a third vigorously disputed the point whether he wore whiskers at all. It was allowed by all, however, that he had been a great beau in the town where he had passed his college days. It was also inquired into whether he were matrimonially engaged; and the negative being understood, they diverted themselves with predicting to one another the capture of such a prize; each prophecy being

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received with such disclaimers as "Come now!" "Do be still!" "Hush your nonsense!" and the like.

At length the long-wished-for hour arrived, and one by one the lords of creation began to make their appearance; and one of the last was this much admired youth.

"That is Joe Adams." "That is he!" was the busy whisper, as a tall, well-looking young man came into the room with the easy air of one who had seen several things before, and was not to be abashed by the combined blaze of all the village beauties.

In truth, our friend Joseph had made the most of his residence in N., paying his court no less to the Graces than the Muses. His fine person, his frank, manly air, his ready conversation, and his faculty of universal adaptation had made his society much coveted among the *beau monde* of N.; and though the place was small, he had become familiar with much good society.

We hardly know whether we may venture to tell our fair readers the whole truth in regard to our hero. We will merely hint, in the gentlest manner in the world, that Mr. Joseph Adams, being undeniably first in the classics and first in the drawing-room, having been gravely commended in his class by his venerable president, and gayly flattered in the drawing-room by the elegant Miss This and Miss That, was rather inclining to the opinion that he was an uncommonly fine fellow, and even had the assurance to think that, under present circumstances, he could please without making any great effort — a thing which, however true it were in point of fact, is obviously improper to be thought of by a young man. Be that as it may, he moved about from one to another, shaking hands with all the old ladies, and listening with the greatest affability to the various comments on his growth and personal appearance, his points of resemblance to his father, mother, grandfather, and grandmother, which are always detected by the superior acumen of elderly females.

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Among the younger ones he at once, and with full frankness, recognized old schoolmates, and partners in various whortleberry, chestnut, and strawberry excursions, and thus called out an abundant flow of conversation. Nevertheless, his eye wandered occasionally around the room, as if in search of something not there. What could it be? It kindled, however, with an expression of sudden brightness as he perceived the tall and spare figure of Miss Silence; whether owing to the personal fascinations of that lady, or to other causes, we leave the reader to determine.

Miss Silence had predetermined never to speak a word again to Uncle Jaw or any of his race; but she was taken by surprise at the frank, extended hand and friendly "How do ye do?" It was not in woman to resist so cordial an address from a handsome young man, and Miss Silence gave her hand, and replied with a graciousness that amazed herself. At this moment, also, certain soft blue eyes peeped forth from a corner, just "to see if he looked as he used to." Yes, there he was! the same dark, mirthful eyes that used to peer on her from behind the corners of the spelling-book at the district school; and Susan Jones gave a deep sigh to those times, and then wondered why she happened to think of such nonsense.

"How is your sister, little Miss Susan?" said Joseph.

"Why, she is here — have you not seen her?" said Silence; "there she is, in that corner."

Joseph looked, but could scarcely recognize her. There stood a tall, slender blooming girl, that might have been selected as a specimen of that union of perfect health with delicate fairness so characteristic of the young New England beauty.

She was engaged in telling some merry story to a knot of young girls, and the rich color that, like a bright spirit, constantly went and came in her cheeks; the dimples, quick and varying as those of a little brook; the clear,

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mild eye; the clustering curls, and, above all, the happy, rejoicing smile, and the transparent frankness and simplicity of expression which beamed like sunshine about her, all formed a combination of charms that took our hero quite by surprise; and when Silence, who had a remarkable degree of directness in all her dealings, called out, "Here, Susan, is Joe Adams, inquiring after you!" our practiced young gentleman felt himself color to the roots of his hair, and for a moment he could scarce recollect that first rudiment of manners, "to make his bow like a good boy." Susan colored also; but, perceiving the confusion of our hero, her countenance assumed an expression of mischievous drollery, which, helped on by the titter of her companions, added not a little to his confusion.

"Deuce take it!" thought he, "what's the matter with me?" and, calling up his courage, he dashed into the formidable circle of fair ones, and began chattering with one and another, calling by name with or without introduction, remembering things that never happened, with a freedom that was perfectly fascinating.

"Really, how handsome he has grown!" thought Susan; and she colored deeply when once or twice the dark eyes of our hero made the same observation with regard to herself, in that quick, intelligible dialect which eyes alone can speak. And when the little party dispersed, as they did very punctually at nine o'clock, our hero requested of Miss Silence the honor of attending her home — an evidence of discriminating taste which materially raised him in the estimation of that lady. It was true, to be sure, that Susan walked on the other side of him, her little white hand just within his arm; and there was something in that light touch that puzzled him unaccountably, as might be inferred from the frequency with which Miss Silence was obliged to bring up the ends of conversation with, "What did you say?" "What were you going to say?" and other perse-

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vering forms of inquiry, with which a regular-trained matter-of-fact talker will hunt down a poor fellow mortal who is in danger of sinking into a comfortable reverie.

When they parted at the gate, however, Silence gave our hero a hearty invitation to "come and see them any time," which he mentally regarded as more to the point than anything else that had been said. As Joseph soberly retraced his way homeward, his thoughts, by some unaccountable association, began to revert to such topics as the loneliness of man by himself, the need of kindred spirits, the solaces of sympathy, and other like matters.

That night Joseph dreamed of trotting along with his dinner basket to the old brown schoolhouse, and vainly endeavoring to overtake Susan Jones, whom he saw with her little pasteboard sunbonnet a few yards in front of him; then he was teetering with her on a long board, her bright little face glancing up and down, while every curl around it seemed to be living with delight; and then he was snowballing Tom Williams for knocking down Susan's doll's house, or he sat by her on a bench, helping her out with a long sum in arithmetic; but, with the mischievous fatality of dreams, the more he ciphered and expounded, the longer and more hopeless grew the sum; and he awoke in the morning pshawing at his ill luck, after having done a sum over half a dozen times, while Susan seemed to be looking on with the same air of arch drollery that he saw on her face the evening before.

"Joseph," said Uncle Jaw, the next morning at breakfast, "I s'pose Squire Jones's daughters were not at the quilting."

"Yes, sir, they were," said our hero; "they were both there."

"Why, you don't say so!"

"They certainly were," persisted the son.

"Well, I thought the old gal had too much spunk for

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that; you see there is a quarrel between the deacon and them gals."

"Indeed!" said Joseph. "I thought the deacon never quarreled with anybody."

"But, you see, old Silence there, she will quarrel with *him*; railly, that cretur is a tough one;" and Uncle Jaw leaned back in his chair, and contemplated the quarrelsome propensities of Miss Silence with the satisfaction of a kindred spirit. "But I 'll fix her yet," he continued; "I see how to work it."

"Indeed, father, I did not know that you had anything to do with their affairs."

"Hain't I? I should like to know if I hain't!" replied Uncle Jaw triumphantly. "Now, see here, Joseph: you see, I mean you shall be a lawyer: I 'm pretty considerable of a lawyer myself — that is, for one not college larnt; and I 'll tell you how it is;" and thereupon Uncle Jaw launched forth into the case of the medder land and the mill, and concluded with, "Now, Joseph, this 'ere is a kinder whetstone for you to hone up your wits on."

In pursuance, therefore, of this plan of sharpening his wits in the manner aforesaid, our hero, after breakfast, went, like a dutiful son, directly towards Squire Jones's, doubtless for the purpose of taking ocular survey of the meadow land, mill, and stone wall; but, by some unaccountable mistake lost his way, and found himself standing before the door of Squire Jones's house.

The old squire had been among the aristocracy of the village, and his house had been the ultimate standard of comparison in all matters of style and garniture. Their big front room, instead of being strewn with lumps of sand, duly streaked over twice a week, was resplendent with a carpet of red, yellow, and black stripes, while a towering pair of long-legged brass andirons, scoured to a silvery white, gave an air of magnificence to the chimney, which

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was materially increased by the tall brass-headed shovel and tongs, which, like a decorous, starched married couple, stood bolt upright in their places on either side. The sanctity of the place was still further maintained by keeping the window shutters always closed, admitting only so much light as could come in by a round hole at the top of the shutter; and it was only on occasions of extraordinary magnificence that the room was thrown open to profane eyes.

Our hero was surprised, therefore, to find both the doors and windows of this apartment open, and symptoms evident of its being in daily occupation. The furniture still retained its massive, clumsy stiffness, but there were various tokens that lighter fingers had been at work there since the notable days of good Dame Jones. There was a vase of flowers on the table, two or three books of poetry, and a little fairy work-basket, from which peeped forth the edges of some worked ruffling; there was a small writing-desk, and last, not least, in a lady's collection, an album, with leaves of every color of the rainbow, containing inscriptions, in sundry strong masculine hands, "To Susan," indicating that other people had had their eyes open as well as Mr. Joseph Adams. "So," said he to himself, "this quiet little beauty has had admirers, after all;" and consequent upon this came another question (which was none of his concern, to be sure), whether the little lady were or were not engaged; and from these speculations he was aroused by a light footstep, and anon the neat form of Susan made its appearance.

"Good-morning, Miss Jones," said he, bowing.

Now, there is something very comical in the feeling, when little boys and girls, who have always known each other as plain Susan or Joseph, first meet as "Mr." or "Miss" So-and-so. Each one feels half disposed, half afraid, to return to the old familiar form, and awkwardly fettered by the recollection that they are no longer children. Both parties

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had felt this the evening before, when they met in company; but now that they were alone together, the feeling became still stronger; and when Susan had requested Mr. Adams to take a chair, and Mr. Adams had inquired after Miss Susan's health, there ensued a pause, which, the longer it continued, seemed the more difficult to break, and during which Susan's pretty face slowly assumed an expression of the ludicrous, till she was as near laughing as propriety would admit; and Mr. Adams, having looked out at the window, and up at the mantelpiece, and down at the carpet, at last looked at Susan; their eyes met; the effect was electrical; they both smiled, and then laughed outright, after which the whole difficulty of conversation vanished.

"Susan," said Joseph, "do you remember the old schoolhouse?"

"I thought that was what you were thinking of," said Susan; "but, really, you have grown and altered so that I could hardly believe my eyes last night."

"Nor I mine," said Joseph, with a glance that gave a very complimentary turn to the expression.

Our readers may imagine that after this the conversation proceeded to grow increasingly confidential and interesting; that from the account of early life, each proceeded to let the other know something of intervening history, in the course of which each discovered a number of new and admirable traits in the other, such things being matters of very common occurrence. In the course of the conversation Joseph discovered that it was necessary that Susan should have two or three books then in his possession; and as promptitude is a great matter in such cases, he promised to bring them "tomorrow."

For some time our young friends pursued their acquaintance without a distinct consciousness of anything except that it was a very pleasant thing to be together. During the long, still afternoons, they rambled among the fading woods, now

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illuminated with the radiance of the dying year, and sentimentalized and quoted poetry; and almost every evening Joseph found some errand to bring him to the house; a book for Miss Susan, or a bundle of roots and herbs for Miss Silence, or some remarkably fine yarn for her to knit — attentions which retained our hero in the good graces of the latter lady, and gained him the credit of being "a young man that knew how to behave himself." As Susan was a leading member in the village choir, our hero was directly attacked with a violent passion for sacred music, which brought him punctually to the singing-school, where the young people came together to sing anthems and fuguing tunes, and to eat apples and chestnuts.

It cannot be supposed that all these things passed unnoticed by those wakeful eyes that are ever upon the motions of such "bright, particular stars;" and as is usual in such cases, many things were known to a certainty which were not yet known to the parties themselves. The young belles and beaux whispered and tittered, and passed the original jokes and witticisms common in such cases, while the old ladies soberly took the matter in hand when they went out with their knitting to make afternoon visits, considering how much money Uncle Jaw had, how much his son would have, and what all together would come to, and whether Joseph would be a "smart man," and Susan a good housekeeper, with all the "ifs, ands, and buts" of married life.

But the most fearful wonders and prognostics crowded around the point "what Uncle Jaw would have to say to the matter." His lawsuit with the sisters being well understood, as there was every reason it should be, it was surmised what two such vigorous belligerents as himself and Miss Silence would say to the prospect of a matrimonial conjunction. It was also reported that Deacon Enos Dudley had a claim to the land which constituted the finest part of Susan's portion, the loss of which would render the con-

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sent of Uncle Jaw still more doubtful. But all this while Miss Silence knew nothing of the matter, for her habit of considering and treating Susan as a child seemed to gain strength with time. Susan was always to be seen to, and watched, and instructed, and taught; and Miss Silence could not conceive that one who could not even make pickles, without her to oversee, could think of such a matter as setting up housekeeping on her own account. To be sure, she began to observe an extraordinary change in her sister; remarked that "lately Susan seemed to be getting sort o' crazy-headed;" that she seemed not to have any "faculty" for anything; that she had made gingerbread twice, and forgot the ginger one time, and put in mustard the other; that she shook the salt-cellar out in the tablecloth, and let the cat into the pantry half a dozen times; and that when scolded for these sins of omission or commission, she had a fit of crying, and did a little worse than before. Silence was of opinion that Susan was getting to be "weakly and naarvy," and actually concocted an unmerciful pitcher of wormwood and boneset, which she said was to keep off the "shaking weakness" that was coming over her. In vain poor Susan protested that she was well enough; Miss Silence knew better; and one evening she entertained Mr. Joseph Adams with a long statement of the case in all its bearings, and ended with demanding his opinion, as a candid listener, whether the wormwood and boneset sentence should not be executed.

Poor Susan had that very afternoon parted from a knot of young friends who had teased her most unmercifully on the score of attentions received, till she began to think the very leaves and stones were so many eyes to pry into her secret feelings; and then to have the whole case set in order before the very person, too, whom she most dreaded. "Certainly he would think she was acting like a fool; perhaps he did not mean anything more than friendship, after

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all; and she would not for the world have him suppose that she cared a copper more for him than for any other friend, or that she was in love, of all things." So she sat very busy with her knitting-work, scarcely knowing what she was about, till Silence called out, —

"Why, Susan, what a piece of work you are making of that stocking heel! What in the world are you doing to it?"

Susan dropped her knitting, and making some pettish answer, escaped out of the room.

"Now, did you ever?" said Silence, laying down the seam she had been cross-stitching; "what *is* the matter with her, Mr. Adams?"

"Miss Susan is certainly indisposed," replied our hero gravely. "I must get her to take your advice, Miss Silence."

Our hero followed Susan to the front door, where she stood looking out at the moon, and begged to know what distressed her.

Of course it was "nothing," the young lady's usual complaint when in low spirits; and to show that she was perfectly easy, she began an unsparing attack on a white rose-bush near by.

"Susan!" said Joseph, laying his hand on hers, and in a tone that made her start. She shook back her curls, and looked up to him with such an innocent, confiding face!

Ah, my good reader, you may go on with this part of the story for yourself. We are principled against unveiling the "sacred mysteries," the "thoughts that breathe and words that burn," in such little moonlight interviews as these. You may fancy all that followed; and we can only assure all who are doubtful that, under judicious management, cases of this kind may be disposed of without wormwood or boneset. Our hero and heroine were called to sublunary realities by the voice of Miss Silence, who came into the

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passage to see what upon earth they were doing. That lady was satisfied by the representations of so friendly and learned a young man as Joseph that nothing immediately alarming was to be apprehended in the case of Susan; and she retired. From that evening Susan stepped about with a heart many pounds lighter than before.

"I'll tell you what, Joseph," said Uncle Jaw, "I'll tell you what, now: I hear 'em tell that you've took and courted that 'ere Susan Jones. Now, I jest want to know if it's true."

There was an explicitness about this mode of inquiry that took our hero quite by surprise, so that he could only reply, —

"Why, sir, supposing I had, would there be any objection to it in your mind?"

"Don't talk to me," said Uncle Jaw. "I jest want to know if it's true."

Our hero put his hands in his pockets, walked to the window and whistled.

"'Cause if you have," said Uncle Jaw, "you may jest uncourt as fast as you can; for Squire Jones's daughter won't get a single cent of my money, I can tell you that."

"Why, father, Susan Jones is not to blame for anything that her father did; and I'm sure she is a pretty girl enough."

"I don't care if she is pretty. What's that to me? I've got you through college, Joseph; and a hard time I've had of it, a-delvin' and slavin'; and here you come, and the very first thing you do you must take and court that 'ere Squire Jones's daughter, who was always putting himself up above me. Besides, I mean to have the law on that estate yet; and Deacon Dudley, he will have the law, too; and it will cut off the best piece of land the girl has; and when you get married, I mean you shall have something. It's jest a trick of them gals at me; but I

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guess I 'll come up with 'em yet. I 'm just a-goin' down to have a ' regular hash ' with old Silence, to let her know she can't come round me that way."

" Silence," said Susan, drawing her head into the window, and looking apprehensive, " there is Mr. Adams coming here."

" What, Joe Adams ? Well, and what if he is ? "

" No, no, sister, but it is his father — it is Uncle Jaw."

" Well, s'pose 't is, child — what scares you ? S'pose I 'm afraid of him ? If he wants more than I gave him last time, I 'll put it on." So saying, Miss Silence took her knitting work and marched down into the sitting-room, and sat herself bolt upright in an attitude of defiance, while poor Susan, feeling her heart beat unaccountably fast, glided out of the room.

" Well, good-morning, Miss Silence," said Uncle Jaw. after having scraped his feet on the scraper, and scrubbed them on the mat nearly ten minutes, in silent deliberation.

" Morning, sir," said Silence, abbreviating the " good."

Uncle Jaw helped himself to a chair directly in front of the enemy, dropped his hat on the floor, and surveyed Miss Silence with a dogged air of satisfaction, like one who is sitting down to a regular, comfortable quarrel, and means to make the most of it.

Miss Silence tossed her head disdainfully, but scorned to commence hostilities.

" So, Miss Silence," said Uncle Jaw deliberately, " you don't think you 'll do anything about that 'ere matter."

" What matter ? " said Silence, with an intonation resembling that of a roasted chestnut when it bursts from the fire.

" I really thought, Miss Silence, in that 'ere talk I had with you about Squire Jones's cheatin' about that 'ere " —

" Mr. Adams," said Silence, " I tell you, to begin with, I 'm not a-going to be sauced in this 'ere way by you. You

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hain't got common decency, nor common sense, nor common anything else, to talk so to me about my father; I won't bear it, I tell you."

"Why, Miss Jones," said Uncle Jaw, "how you talk. Well, to be sure, Squire Jones is dead and gone, and it is as well not to call it cheatin', as I was tellin' Deacon Enos when he was talking about that 'ere lot — that 'ere lot, you know, that he sold the deacon, and never let him have the deed on't."

"That 's a lie," said Silence, starting on her feet; "that 's an up and down black lie! I tell you that, now, before you say another word."

"Miss Silence, railly, you seem to be getting touchy," said Uncle Jaw; "well, to be sure, if the deacon can let that pass, other folks can; and maybe the deacon will, because Squire Jones was a church member, and the deacon is 'mazin' tender about bringin' out anything against professors; but railly, now, Miss Silence, I did n't think you and Susan were going to work it so cunning in this here way."

"I don't know what you mean, and what 's more, I don't care," said Silence, resuming her work, and calling back the bolt-upright dignity with which she began.

There was a pause of some moments, during which the features of Silence worked with suppressed rage, which was contemplated by Uncle Jaw with undisguised satisfaction.

"You see, I s'pose, I should n't 'a' minded your Susan's setting out to court my Joe, if it had n't 'a' been for them things."

"Courting your son! Mr. Adams, I should like to know what you mean by that. I 'm sure nobody wants your son, though he 's a civil, likely fellow enough; yet with such an old dragon for a father, I 'll warrant he won't get anybody to court him, nor be courted by him neither."

"Railly, Miss Silence, you ain't hardly civil, now."

"Civil! I should like to know who could be civil. You

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know, now, as well as I do, that you are saying all this out of clear, sheer ugliness; and that 's what you keep a-doing all round the neighborhood."

"Miss Silence," said Uncle Jaw, "I don't want no hard words with you. It 's pretty much known round the neighborhood that your Susan thinks she 'll get my Joe, and I s'pose you was thinking that perhaps it would be the best way of settling up matters; but you see, now, I took and tell'd my son I railly did n't see as I could afford it; I took and tell'd him that young folks must have something considerable to start with; and that, if Susan lost that 'ere piece of ground, as is likely she will, it would be cutting off quite too much of a piece; so you see, I don't want you to take no encouragement about that."

"Well, I think this is pretty well!" exclaimed Silence, provoked beyond measure or endurance. "You old torment! think I don't know what you 're at! I and Susan courting your son? I wonder if you ain't ashamed of yourself, now! I should like to know what I or she have done, now, to get that notion into your head?"

"I did n't s'pose you 'spected to get him yourself," said Uncle Jaw, "for I guess by this time you 've pretty much gin up trying, hain't ye? But Susan does, I 'm pretty sure."

"Here, Susan! Susan! you — come down!" called Miss Silence, in great wrath, throwing open the chamber door; "Mr. Adams wants to speak with you." Susan, fluttering and agitated, slowly descended into the room, where she stopped, and looked hesitatingly, first at Uncle Jaw and then at her sister, who, without ceremony, proposed the subject matter of the interview as follows: —

"Now, Susan, here 's this man pretends to say that you 've been a-courting and snaring to get his son; and I just want you to tell him that you hain't never had no thought of him, and that you won't have, neither."

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This considerate way of announcing the subject had the effect of bringing the burning color into Susan's face, as she stood like a convicted culprit, with her eyes bent on the floor.

Uncle Jaw, savage as he was, was always moved by female loveliness, as wild beasts are said to be mysteriously swayed by music, and looked on the beautiful, downcast face with more softening than Miss Silence, who, provoked that Susan did not immediately respond to the question, seized her by the arm, and eagerly reiterated, —

"Susan! why don't you speak, child?"

Gathering desperate courage, Susan shook off the hand of Silence, and straightened herself up with as much dignity as some little flower lifts up its head when it has been bent down by raindrops.

"Silence," she said, "I never would have come down if I had thought it was to hear such things as this. Mr. Adams, all I have to say to you is, that your son has sought me, and not I your son. If you wish to know any more, he can tell you better than I."

"Well, I vow! she is a pretty gal," said Uncle Jaw, as Susan shut the door.

This exclamation was involuntary; then recollecting himself, he picked up his hat, and saying, "Well, I guess I may as well get along hum," he began to depart; but turning round before he shut the door, he said, "Miss Silence, if you should conclude to do anything about that 'ere fence, just send word over and let me know."

Silence, without deigning any reply, marched up into Susan's little chamber, where our heroine was treating resolution to a good fit of crying.

"Susan, I did not think you had been such a fool," said the lady. "I do want to know, now, if you 've railly been thinking of getting married, and to that Joe Adams of all folks!"

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Poor Susan! such an interlude in all her pretty, romantic little dreams about kindred feelings and a hundred other delightful ideas, that flutter like singing birds through the fairy land of first love. Such an interlude! to be called on by gruff human voices to give up all the cherished secrets that she had trembled to whisper even to herself. She felt as if love itself had been defiled by the coarse, rough hands that had been meddling with it; so to her sister's soothing address Susan made no answer, only to cry and sob still more bitterly than before.

Miss Silence, if she had a great stout heart, had no less a kind one, and seeing Susan take the matter so bitterly to heart, she began gradually to subside.

"Susan, you poor little fool, you," said she, at the same time giving her a hearty slap, as expressive of earnest sympathy, "I really do feel for you; that good-for-nothing fellow has been a-cheatin' you, I do believe."

"Oh, don't talk any more about it, for mercy's sake," said Susan; "I am sick of the whole of it."

"That 's you, Susan! Glad to hear you say so! I 'll stand up for you, Susan; if I catch Joe Adams coming here again with his palavering face, I 'll let him know!"

"No, no! Don't for mercy's sake, say anything to Mr. Adams — don't!"

"Well, child, don't claw hold of a body so! Well, at any rate, I 'll just let Joe Adams know that we hain't nothing more to say to him."

"But I don't wish to say that; that is — I don't know — indeed, sister Silence, don't say anything about it."

"Why not? You ain't such a natural, now, as to want to marry him, after all, hey?"

"I don't know what I want, nor what I don't want; only, Silence, do now, if you love me, do promise not to say anything at all to Mr. Adams — don't."

"Well, then, I won't," said Silence; "but, Susan, if

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you railly was in love all this while, why hain't you been and told me? Don't you know that I'm as much as a mother to you, and you ought to have told me in the beginning?"

"I don't know, Silence! I could n't — I don't want to talk about it."

"Well, Susan, you ain't a bit like me," said Silence — a remark evincing great discrimination, certainly, and with which the conversation terminated.

That very evening our friend Joseph walked down towards the dwelling of the sisters, not without some anxiety for the result, for he knew by his father's satisfied appearance that war had been declared. He walked into the family room and found nobody there but Miss Silence, who was sitting grim as an Egyptian sphinx, stitching very vigorously on a meal bag, in which interesting employment she thought proper to be so much engaged as not to remark the entrance of our hero. To Joseph's accustomed "Good-evening, Miss Silence," she replied merely by looking up with a cold nod, and went on with her sewing. It appeared that she had determined on a literal version of her promise not to say anything to Mr. Adams.

Our hero, as we have before stated, was familiar with the crooks and turns of the female mind, and mentally resolved to put a bold face on the matter, and give Miss Silence no encouragement in her attempt to make him feel himself unwelcome. It was rather a frosty autumnal evening, and the fire on the hearth was decaying. Mr. Joseph bustled about most energetically, throwing down the tongs and shovel and bellows, while he pulled the fire to pieces, raked out ashes and brands, and then, in a twinkling, was at the woodpile, from whence he selected a massive backlog and forestick, with accompaniments, which were soon roaring and crackling in the chimney.

"There, now, that does look something like comfort,"

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said our hero; and drawing forward the big rocking-chair, he seated himself in it, and rubbed his hands with an air of great complacency. Miss Silence looked not up, but stitched so much the faster, so that one might distinctly hear the crack of the needle and the whistle of the thread all over the apartment.

"Have you a headache to-night, Miss Silence?"

"No!" was the gruff answer.

"Are you in a hurry about those bags?" said he, glancing at a pile of unmade ones which lay by her side.

No reply. "Hang it all!" said our hero to himself, "I'll make her speak."

Miss Silence's needlebook and brown thread lay on a chair beside her. Our friend helped himself to a needle and thread, and taking one of the bags, planted himself bolt upright opposite to Miss Silence, and pinning his work to his knee, commenced stitching at a rate fully equal to her own. Miss Silence looked up and fidgeted, but went on with her work faster than before; but the faster she worked, the faster and steadier worked our hero, all in "marvelous silence." There began to be an odd twitching about the muscles of Miss Silence's face; our hero took no notice, having pursed his features into an expression of unexampled gravity, which only grew more intense as he perceived, by certain uneasy movements, that the adversary was beginning to waver. As they were sitting, stitching away, their needles whizzing at each other like a couple of locomotives engaged in conversation, Susan opened the door.

The poor child had been crying for the greater part of her spare time during the day, and was in no very merry humor; but the moment that her astonished eyes comprehended the scene, she burst into a fit of almost inextinguishable merriment, while Silence laid down her needle, and looked half amused and half angry. Our hero, however,

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continued his business with inflexible perseverance, unpinning his work and moving the seam along, and going on with increased velocity. Poor Miss Silence was at length vanquished, and joined in the loud laugh which seemed to convulse her sister. Whereupon our hero unpinned his work, and folding it up, looked up at her with all the assurance of impudence triumphant, and remarked to Susan, —

"Your sister had such a pile of these pillowcases to make, that she was quite discouraged, and engaged me to do half a dozen of them; when I first came in she was so busy she could not even speak to me."

"Well, if you ain't the beater for impudence!" said Miss Silence.

"The beater for industry — so I thought," rejoined our hero.

Susan, who had been in a highly tragical state of mind all day, and who was meditating on nothing less sublime than an eternal separation from her lover, which she had imagined, with all the affecting attendants and consequents, was entirely revolutionized by the unexpected turn thus given to her ideas, while our hero pursued the opportunity he had made for himself, and exerted his powers of entertainment to the utmost, till Miss Silence, declaring that if she had been washing all day she should not have been more tired than she was with laughing, took up her candle, and good-naturedly left our young people to settle matters between themselves. There was a grave pause of some length when she had departed, which was broken by our hero, who, seating himself by Susan, inquired very seriously if his father had made proposals of marriage to Miss Silence that morning.

"No, you provoking creature!" said Susan, at the same time laughing at the absurdity of the idea.

"Well, now, don't draw on your long face again, Susan," said Joseph; "you have been trying to lengthen it down

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all the evening, if I would have let you. Seriously, now, I know that something painful passed between my father and you this morning, but I shall not inquire what it was. I only tell you, frankly, that he has expressed his disapprobation of our engagement, forbidden me to go on with it, and "—

"And, consequently, I release you from all engagements and obligations to me, even before you ask it," said Susan.

"You are extremely accommodating," replied Joseph; "but I cannot promise to be as obliging in giving up certain promises made to me, unless, indeed, the feelings that dictated them should have changed."

"Oh, no — no, indeed," said Susan earnestly; "you know it is not that; but if your father objects to me"—

"If my father objects to you, he is welcome not to marry you," said Joseph.

"Now, Joseph, do be serious," said Susan.

"Well, then, seriously, Susan, I know my obligations to my father, and in all that relates to his comfort I will ever be dutiful and submissive, for I have no college-boy pride on the subject of submission; but in a matter so individually my own as the choice of a wife, in a matter that will most likely affect my happiness years and years after he has ceased to be, I hold that I have a right to consult my own inclinations, and, by your leave, my dear little lady, I shall take that liberty."

"But, then, if your father is made angry, you know what sort of a man he is; and how could I stand in the way of all your prospects?"

"Why, my dear Susan, do you think I count myself dependent upon my father, like the heir of an English estate, who has nothing to do but sit still and wait for money to come to him? No! I have energy and education to start with, and if I cannot take care of myself, and you too, then cast me off and welcome;" and, as Joseph spoke, his fine

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face glowed with a conscious power, which unfettered youth never feels so fully as in America. He paused a moment, and resumed: "Nevertheless, Susan, I respect my father; whatever others may say of him, I shall never forget that I owe to his hard earnings the education that enables me to do or be anything, and I shall not wantonly or rudely cross him. I do not despair of gaining his consent; my father has a great partiality for pretty girls, and if his love of contradiction is not kept awake by open argument, I will trust to time and you to bring him round; but, whatever comes, rest assured, my dearest one, I have chosen for life, and cannot change."

The conversation, after this, took a turn which may readily be imagined by all who have been in the same situation, and will, therefore, need no further illustration.

"Well, deacon, railly I don't know what to think now; there's my Joe, he's took and been a-courting that 'ere Susan," said Uncle Jaw.

This was the introduction to one of Uncle Jaw's periodical visits to Deacon Enos, who was sitting with his usual air of mild abstraction, looking into the coals of a bright November fire, while his busy helpmate was industriously rattling her knitting needles by his side.

A close observer might have suspected that this was no news to the good deacon, who had given a great deal of good advice, in private, to Master Joseph of late; but he only relaxed his features into a quiet smile, and ejaculated, "I want to know!"

"Yes; and railly, deacon, that 'ere gal is a rail pretty un. I was a-tellin' my folks that our new minister's wife was a fool to her."

"And so your son is going to marry her?" said the good lady; "I knew that long ago."

"Well — no — not so fast; ye see there's two to that

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bargain yet. You see, Joe, he never said a word to me, but took and courted the gal out of his own head; and when I come to know, says I, 'Joe,' says I, 'that 'ere gal won't do for me;' and I took and tell'd him, then, about that 'ere old fence, and all about that old mill, and them medders of mine; and I tell'd him, too, about that 'ere lot of Susan's; and I should like to know, now, deacon, how that lot business is a-going to turn out."

"Judge Smith and Squire Moseley say that my claim to it will stand," said the deacon.

"They do?" said Uncle Jaw with much satisfaction; "s'pose, then, you 'll sue, won't you?"

"I don't know," replied the deacon meditatively.

Uncle Jaw was thoroughly amazed; that any one should have doubts about entering suit for a fine piece of land, when sure of obtaining it, was a problem quite beyond his powers of solving.

"You say your son has courted the girl," said the deacon after a long pause; "that strip of land is the best part of Susan's share; I paid down five hundred dollars on the nail for it; I've got papers here that Judge Smith and Squire Moseley say will stand good in any court of law."

Uncle Jaw pricked up his ears and was all attention, eyeing with eager looks the packet; but, to his disappointment, the deacon deliberately laid it into his desk, shut and locked it, and resumed his seat.

"Now, railly," said Uncle Jaw, "I should like to know the particulars."

"Well, well," said the deacon, "the lawyers will be at my house to-morrow evening, and if you have any concern about it, you may as well come along."

Uncle Jaw wondered all the way home at what he could have done to get himself into the confidence of the old deacon, who, he rejoiced to think, was a-going to "take" and go to law like other folks.

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The next day there was an appearance of some bustle and preparation about the deacon's house; the best room was opened and aired; an ovenful of cake was baked; and our friend Joseph, with a face full of business, was seen passing to and fro, in and out of the house, from various closetings with the deacon. The deacon's lady bustled about the house with an air of wonderful mystery, and even gave her directions about eggs and raisins in a whisper, lest they should possibly let out some eventful secret.

The afternoon of that day Joseph appeared at the house of the sisters, stating that there was to be company at the deacon's that evening, and he was sent to invite them.

"Why, what's got into the deacon's folks lately," said Silence, "to have company so often? Joe Adams, this 'ere is some 'cut up' of yours. Come, what are you up to now?"

"Come, come, dress yourselves and get ready," said Joseph; and, stepping up to Susan, as she was following Silence out of the room, he whispered something into her ear, at which she stopped short and colored violently.

"Why, Joseph, what do you mean?"

"It is so," said he.

"No, no, Joseph; no, I can't, indeed I can't."

"But you can, Susan."

"Oh, Joseph, don't."

"Oh, Susan, do."

"Why, how strange, Joseph!"

"Come, come, my dear, you keep me waiting. If you have any objections on the score of propriety, we will talk about them to-morrow;" and our hero looked so saucy and so resolute that there was no disputing further; so, after a little more lingering and blushing on Susan's part, and a few kisses and persuasions on the part of the suitor, Miss Susan seemed to be brought to a state of resignation.

At a table in the middle of Uncle Enos's north front room were seated the two lawyers, whose legal opinion was that

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evening to be fully made up. The younger of these, Squire Moseley, was a rosy, portly, laughing little bachelor, who boasted that he had offered himself, in rotation, to every pretty girl within twenty miles round, and, among others, to Susan Jones, notwithstanding which he still remained a bachelor, with a fair prospect of being an old one; but none of these things disturbed the boundless flow of good nature and complacency with which he seemed at all times full to overflowing. On the present occasion he appeared to be particularly in his element, as if he had some law business in hand remarkably suited to his turn of mind; for, on finishing the inspection of the papers, he started up, slapped his graver brother on the back, made two or three flourishes round the room, and then seizing the old deacon's hand, shook it violently, exclaiming, —

"All 's right, deacon, all 's right! Go it! go it! hurrah!"

When Uncle Jaw entered, the deacon, without preface, handed him a chair and the papers, saying, —

"These papers are what you wanted to see. I just wish you would read them over."

Uncle Jaw read them deliberately over. "Didn't I tell ye so, deacon? The case is as clear as a bell: now ye will go to law, won't you?"

"Look here, Mr. Adams; now you have seen these papers, and heard what 's to be said, I 'll make you an offer. Let your son marry Susan Jones, and I 'll burn these papers and say no more about it, and there won't be a girl in the parish with a finer portion."

Uncle Jaw opened his eyes with amazement, and looked at the old man, his mouth gradually expanding wider and wider, as if he hoped, in time, to swallow the idea.

"Well, now, I swan!" at length he ejaculated.

"I mean just as I say," said the deacon.

"Why, that 's the same as giving the gal five hundred dollars out of your own pocket, and she ain't no relation neither."

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"I know it," said the Deacon; "but I have said I will do it."

"What upon 'arth for?" said Uncle Jaw.

"To make peace," said the deacon, "and to let you know that when I say it is better to give up one's rights than to quarrel, I mean so. I am an old man; my children are dead," — his voice faltered, — "my treasures are laid up in heaven; if I can make the children happy, why, I will. When I thought I had lost the land, I made up my mind to lose it, and so I can now."

Uncle Jaw looked fixedly on the old deacon, and said, —

"Well, deacon, I believe you. I vow, if you hain't got something ahead in t'other world, I 'd like to know who has — that 's all; so, if Joe has no objections, and I rather guess he won't have" —

"The short of the matter is," said the squire, "we 'll have a wedding; so come on;" and with that he threw open the parlor door, where stood Susan and Joseph in a recess by the window, while Silence and the Rev. Mr. Bissel were drawn up by the fire, and the deacon's lady was sweeping up the hearth, as she had been doing ever since the party arrived.

Instantly Joseph took the hand of Susan, and led her to the middle of the room; the merry squire seized the hand of Miss Silence, and placed her as bridesmaid, and before any one knew what they were about, the ceremony was in actual progress, and the minister, having been previously instructed, made the two one with extraordinary celerity.

"What! what! what!" said Uncle Jaw. "Joseph! Deacon!"

"Fair bargain, sir," said the squire. "Hand over your papers, deacon."

The deacon handed them, and the squire, having read them aloud, proceeded, with much ceremony, to throw them into the fire; after which, in a mock solemn oration, he

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gave a statement of the whole affair, and concluded with a grave exhortation to the new couple on the duties of wedlock, which unbent the risibles even of the minister himself.

Uncle Jaw looked at his pretty daughter-in-law, who stood half smiling, half blushing, receiving the congratulations of the party, and then at Miss Silence, who appeared full as much taken by surprise as himself.

"Well, well, Miss Silence, these 'ere young folks have come round us slick enough," said he. "I don't see but we must shake hands upon it." And the warlike powers shook hands accordingly, which was a signal for general merriment.

As the company were dispersing, Miss Silence laid hold of the good deacon, and by main strength dragged him aside. "Deacon," said she, "I take back all that 'ere I said about you, every word on't."

"Don't say any more about it, Miss Silence," said the good man; "it 's gone by, and let it go."

"Joseph!" said his father, the next morning, as he was sitting at breakfast with Joseph and Susan, "I calculate I shall feel kinder proud of this 'ere gal! and I 'll tell you what, I 'll jest give you that nice little delicate Stanton place that I took on Stanton's mortgage: it 's a nice little place, with green blinds, and flowers, and all them things, just right for Susan."

And accordingly, many happy years flew over the heads of the young couple in the Stanton place, long after the hoary hairs of their kind benefactor, the deacon, were laid with reverence in the dust. Uncle Jaw was so far wrought upon by the magnanimity of the good old man as to be very materially changed for the better. Instead of quarreling in real earnest all around the neighborhood, he confined himself merely to battling the opposite side of every question with his son, which, as the latter was somewhat of a

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logician, afforded a pretty good field for the exercise of his powers; and he was heard to declare at the funeral of the old deacon, that, "after all, a man got as much, and may be more, to go along as the deacon did, than to be all the time fisting and jawing; though I tell you what it is," said he, afterwards, "'t ain't every one that has the deacon's faculty, anyhow."

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THE TEA ROSE

THERE it stood, in its little green vase, on a light ebony stand, in the window of the drawing-room. The rich satin curtains, with their costly fringes, swept down on either side of it, and around it glittered every rare and fanciful trifle which wealth can offer to luxury; and yet that simple rose was the fairest of them all. So pure it looked, its white leaves just touched with that delicious creamy tint peculiar to its kind; its cup so full, so perfect; its head bending as if it were sinking and melting away in its own richness — Oh, when did ever man make anything to equal the living, perfect flower?

But the sunlight that streamed through the window revealed something fairer than the rose. Reclined on an ottoman, in a deep recess, and intently engaged with a book, rested what seemed the counterpart of that so lovely flower. That cheek so pale, that fair forehead so spiritual, that countenance so full of high thought, those long, downcast lashes, and the expression of the beautiful mouth, sorrowful, yet subdued and sweet — it seemed like the picture of a dream.

"Florence! Florence!" echoed a merry and musical voice, in a sweet, impatient tone. Turn your head, reader, and you will see a light and sparkling maiden, the very model of some little willful elf, born of mischief and motion, with a dancing eye, a foot that scarcely seems to touch the carpet, and a smile so multiplied by dimples that it seems like a thousand smiles at once. "Come, Florence, I say," said the little sprite, "put down that wise, good, and excellent volume, and descend from your cloud, and talk with a poor little mortal."

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The fair apparition, thus adjured, obeyed; and, looking up, revealed just such eyes as you expected to see beneath such lids — eyes deep, pathetic, and rich as a strain of sad music.

"I say, cousin," said the "bright ladye," "I have been thinking what you are to do with your pet rose when you go to New York, as, to our consternation, you are determined to do; you know it would be a sad pity to leave it with such a scatterbrain as I am. I do love flowers, that is a fact; that is, I like a regular bouquet, cut off and tied up, to carry to a party; but as to all this tending and fussing, which is needful to keep them growing, I have no gifts in that line."

"Make yourself easy as to that, Kate," said Florence, with a smile; "I have no intention of calling upon your talents; I have an asylum in view for my favorite."

"Oh, then you know just what I was going to say. Mrs. Marshall, I presume, has been speaking to you; she was here yesterday, and I was quite pathetic upon the subject, telling her the loss your favorite would sustain, and so forth; and she said how delighted she would be to have it in her greenhouse, it is in such a fine state now, so full of buds. I told her I knew you would like to give it to her, you are so fond of Mrs. Marshall, you know."

"Now Kate, I am sorry, but I have otherwise engaged it."

"Whom can it be to? you have so few intimates here."

"Oh, it is only one of my odd fancies."

"But do tell me, Florence."

"Well, cousin, you know the little pale girl to whom we give sewing."

"What! little Mary Stephens? How absurd! Florence, this is just another of your motherly, old-maidish ways — dressing dolls for poor children, making bonnets and knitting socks for all the little dirty babies in the region round

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about. I do believe you have made more calls in those two vile, ill-smelling alleys back of our house, than ever you have in Chestnut Street, though you know everybody is half dying to see you; and now, to crown all, you must give this choice little bijou to a seamstress girl, when one of your most intimate friends, in your own class, would value it so highly. What in the world can people in their circumstances want of flowers?"

"Just the same as I do," replied Florence calmly. "Have you not noticed that the little girl never comes here without looking wistfully at the opening buds? And don't you remember, the other morning, she asked me so prettily if I would let her mother come and see it, she was so fond of flowers?"

"But, Florence, only think of this rare flower standing on a table with ham, eggs, cheese, and flour, and stifled in that close little room where Mrs. Stephens and her daughter manage to wash, iron, cook, and nobody knows what besides."

"Well, Kate, and if I were obliged to live in one coarse room, and wash, and iron, and cook, as you say, — if I had to spend every moment of my time in toil, with no prospect from my window but a brick wall and dirty lane, — such a flower as this would be untold enjoyment to me."

"Pshaw! Florence — all sentiment: poor people have no time to be sentimental. Besides, I don't believe it will grow with them; it is a greenhouse flower, and used to delicate living."

"Oh, as to that, a flower never inquires whether its owner is rich or poor; and Mrs. Stephens, whatever else she has not, has sunshine of as good quality as this that streams through our window. The beautiful things that God makes are his gift to all alike. You will see that my fair rose will be as well and cheerful in Mrs. Stephens's room as in ours."

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"Well, after all, how odd! When one gives to poor people, one wants to give them something useful — a bushel of potatoes, a ham, and such things."

"Why, certainly, potatoes and ham must be supplied; but, having ministered to the first and most craving wants, why not add any other little pleasures or gratifications we may have it in our power to bestow? I know there are many of the poor who have fine feeling and a keen sense of the beautiful, which rusts out and dies because they are too hard pressed to procure it any gratification. Poor Mrs. Stephens, for example: I know she would enjoy birds, and flowers, and music, as much as I do. I have seen her eye light up as she looked on these things in our drawing-room, and yet not one beautiful thing can she command. From necessity, her room, her clothing, all she has, must be coarse and plain. You should have seen the almost rapture she and Mary felt when I offered them my rose."

"Dear me! all this may be true, but I never thought of it before. I never thought that these hard-working people had any ideas of taste!"

"Then why do you see the geranium or rose so carefully nursed in the old cracked teapot in the poorest room, or the morning-glory planted in a box and twined about the window? Do not these show that the human heart yearns for the beautiful in all ranks of life? You remember, Kate, how our washerwoman sat up a whole night, after a hard day's work, to make her first baby a pretty dress to be baptized in."

"Yes, and I remember how I laughed at you for making such a tasteful little cap for it."

"Well, Katy, I think the look of perfect delight with which the poor mother regarded her baby in its new dress and cap was something quite worth creating: I do believe she could not have felt more grateful if I had sent her a barrel of flour."

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"Well, I never thought before of giving anything to the poor but what they really needed, and I have always been willing to do that when I could without going far out of my way."

"Well, cousin, if our Heavenly Father gave to us after this mode, we should have only coarse, shapeless piles of provisions lying about the world, instead of all this beautiful variety of trees, and fruits, and flowers."

"Well, well, cousin, I suppose you are right — but have mercy on my poor head; it is too small to hold so many new ideas all at once — so go on your own way." And the little lady began practicing a waltzing step before the glass with great satisfaction.

It was a very small room, lighted by only one window. There was no carpet on the floor; there was a clean, but coarsely covered bed in one corner; a cupboard, with a few dishes and plates, in the other; a chest of drawers; and before the window stood a small cherry stand, quite new, and, indeed, it was the only article in the room that seemed so.

A pale, sickly-looking woman of about forty was leaning back in her rocking-chair, her eyes closed and her lips compressed as if in pain. She rocked backward and forward a few minutes, pressed her hand hard upon her eyes, and then languidly resumed her fine stitching, on which she had been busy since morning. The door opened, and a slender little girl of about twelve years of age entered, her large blue eyes dilated and radiant with delight as she bore in the vase with the rose-tree in it.

"Oh, see, mother, see! Here is one in full bloom, and two more half out, and ever so many more pretty buds peeping out of the green leaves."

The poor woman's face brightened as she looked, first on the rose and then on her sickly child, on whose face she had not seen so bright a color for months.

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"God bless her!" she exclaimed unconsciously.

"Miss Florence — yes, I knew you would feel so, mother. Does it not make your head feel better to see such a beautiful flower? Now, you will not look so longingly at the flowers in the market, for we have a rose that is handsomer than any of them. Why, it seems to me it is worth as much to us as our whole little garden used to be. Only see how many buds there are! Just count them, and only smell the flower! Now, where shall we set it up?" And Mary skipped about, placing her flower first in one position and then in another, and walking off to see the effect, till her mother gently reminded her that the rose-tree could not preserve its beauty without sunlight.

"Oh, yes, truly," said Mary; "well, then, it must stand here on our new stand. How glad I am that we have such a handsome new stand for it! it will look so much better." And Mrs. Stephens laid down her work, and folded a piece of newspaper, on which the treasure was duly deposited.

"There," said Mary, watching the arrangement eagerly, "that will do — no, for it does not show both the opening buds; a little farther around — a little more; there, that is right;" and then Mary walked around to view the rose in various positions, after which she urged her mother to go with her to the outside, and see how it looked there. "How kind it was in Miss Florence to think of giving this to us!" said Mary; "though she had done so much for us, and given us so many things, yet this seems the best of all, because it seems as if she thought of us, and knew just how we felt; and so few do that, you know, mother."

What a bright afternoon that little gift made in that little room! How much faster Mary's fingers flew the livelong day as she sat sewing by her mother! and Mrs. Stephens, in the happiness of her child, almost forgot that she had a headache, and thought, as she sipped her evening cup of tea, that she felt stronger than she had for some time.

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That rose! its sweet influence died not with the first day. Through all the long, cold winter, the watching, tending, cherishing that flower awakened a thousand pleasant trains of thought, that beguiled the sameness and weariness of their life. Every day the fair, growing thing put forth some fresh beauty — a leaf, a bud, a new shoot, and constantly awakened fresh enjoyment in its possessors. As it stood in the window, the passer-by would sometimes stop and gaze, attracted by its beauty, and then proud and happy was Mary; nor did even the serious and care-worn widow notice with indifference this tribute to the beauty of their favorite.

But little did Florence think, when she bestowed the gift, that there twined about it an invisible thread that reached far and brightly into the web of her destiny.

One cold afternoon in early spring, a tall and graceful gentleman called at the lowly room to pay for the making of some linen by the inmates. He was a stranger and wayfarer recommended through the charity of some of Mrs. Stephens's patrons. As he turned to go, his eye rested admiringly on the rose-tree; and he stopped to gaze at it.

"How beautiful!" said he.

"Yes," said little Mary; "and it was given to us by a lady as sweet and beautiful as that is."

"Ah," said the stranger, turning upon her a pair of bright dark eyes, pleased and rather struck by the communication; "and how came she to give it to you, my little girl?"

"Oh, because we are poor and mother is sick, and we never can have anything pretty. We used to have a garden once; and we loved flowers so much, and Miss Florence found it out, and so she gave us this."

"Florence!" echoed the stranger.

"Yes, Miss Florence l'Estrange — a beautiful lady. They say she was from foreign parts; but she speaks English just like other ladies, only sweeter."

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"Is she here now? is she in this city?" said the gentleman eagerly.

"No; she left some months ago," said the widow, noticing the shade of disappointment on his face. "But," said she, "you can find out all about her at her aunt's, Mrs. Carlysle's, No 10 —— Street."

A short time after, Florence received a letter in a handwriting that made her tremble. During the many early years of her life spent in France she had well learned to know that writing — had loved as a woman like her loves only once; but there had been obstacles of parents and friends, long separation, long suspense, till, after anxious years, she had believed the ocean had closed over that hand and heart; and it was this that had touched with such pensive sorrow the lines in her lovely face.

But this letter told that he was living — that he had traced her, even as a hidden streamlet may be traced, by the freshness, the verdure of heart, which her deeds of kindness had left wherever she had passed. Thus much said, our readers need no help in finishing my story for themselves.

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AUNT MARY

Since sketching character is the mode, I too take up my pencil, not to make you laugh, though peradventure it may be — to get you to sleep.

I am now a tolerably old gentleman — an old bachelor, moreover — and, what is more to the point, an unpretending and sober-minded one. Lest, however, any of the ladies should take exceptions against me in the very outset, I will merely remark, *en passant*, that a man can sometimes become an old bachelor because he has too much heart as well as too little.

Years ago — before any of my readers were born — I was a little good-for-naught of a boy, of precisely that unlucky kind who are always in everybody's way, and always in mischief. I had, to watch over my uprearing, a father and mother, and a whole army of older brothers and sisters. My relatives bore a very great resemblance to other human beings, neither good angels nor the opposite class, but, as mathematicians say, "in the mean proportion."

As I have before insinuated, I was a sort of family scapegrace among them, and one on whose head all the domestic trespasses were regularly visited, either by real, actual desert or by imputation. For this order of things, there was, I confess, a very solid and serious foundation, in the constitution of my mind. Whether I was born under some cross-eyed planet, or whether I was fairy-smitten in my cradle, certain it is that I was, from the dawn of existence, a sort of "Murad the Unlucky;" an out-of-time, out-of-place, out-of-form sort of a boy, with whom nothing prospered. Who

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always left open doors in cold weather? It was Henry. Who was sure to upset his coffee-cup at breakfast, or to knock over his tumbler at dinner, or to prostrate saltcellar, pepper box, and mustard pot, if he only happened to move his arm? Why, Henry. Who was plate-breaker general for the family? It was Henry. Who tangled mamma's silks and cottons, and tore up the last newspaper for papa, or threw down old Phœbe's clothes-horse, with all her clean ironing thereupon? Why, Henry.

Now all this was no "malice prepense" in me, for I solemnly believe that I was the best-natured boy in the world; but something was the matter with the attraction of cohesion, or the attraction of gravitation — with the general dispensation of matter around me — that, let me do what I would, things would fall down, and break, or be torn and damaged, if I only came near them; and my unluckiness in any matter seemed in exact proportion to my carefulness. If anybody in the room with me had a headache, or any kind of nervous irritability, which made it particularly necessary for others to be quiet, and if I was in an especial desire unto the same, I was sure, while stepping around on tiptoe, to fall headlong over a chair, which would give an introductory push to the shovel, which would fall upon the tongs, which would animate the poker, and all together would set in action two or three sticks of wood, and down they would come together, with just that hearty, sociable sort of racket, which showed that they were disposed to make as much of the opportunity as possible. In the same manner, everything that came into my hand, or was at all connected with me, was sure to lose by it. If I rejoiced in a clean apron in the morning, I was sure to make a full-length prostration thereupon on my way to school, and come home nothing better, but rather worse. If I was sent on an errand, I was sure either to lose my money in going, or my purchases in returning; and on these occasions my mother would often comfort me with the re-

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flection that it was well that my ears were fastened to my head, or I should lose them too. Of course, I was a fair mark for the exhortatory powers, not only of my parents, but of all my aunts, uncles, and cousins, to the third and fourth generation, who ceased not to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

All this would have been very well if nature had not gifted me with a very unnecessary and uncomfortable capacity of feeling, which, like a refined ear for music, is undesirable, because, in this world, one meets with discord ninety-nine times where he meets with harmony once. Much, therefore, as I furnished occasion to be scolded at, I never became used to scolding, so that I was just as much galled by it the forty-first time as the first. There was no such thing as philosophy in me: I had just that unreasonable heart which is not conformed unto the nature of things, neither indeed *can* be. I was timid, and shrinking, and proud; I was nothing to any one around me but an awkward, unlucky boy; nothing to my parents but one of half a dozen children, whose faces were to be washed and stockings mended on Saturday afternoon. If I was very sick, I had medicine and the doctor; if I was a little sick, I was exhorted unto patience; and if I was sick at heart, I was left to prescribe for myself.

Now, all this was very well: what should a child need but meat, and drink, and room to play, and a school to teach him reading and writing, and somebody to take care of him when sick? Certainly, nothing. But the feelings of grown-up children exist in the mind of little ones oftener than is supposed; and I had, even at this early day, the same keen sense of all that touched the heart wrong; the same longing for something which should touch it aright; the same discontent, with latent, matter-of-course affection, and the same craving for sympathy, which has been the unprofitable fashion of this world in all ages. And no human being possessing such constitutionals has a better

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chance of being made unhappy by them than the backward, uninteresting, wrong-doing child. We can all sympathize, to some extent, with men and women: but how few can go back to the sympathies of childhood; can understand the desolate insignificance of not being one of the grown-up people; of being sent to bed, to be out of the way in the evening, and to school, to be out of the way in the morning; of manifold similar grievances and distresses, which the child has no elocution to set forth, and the grown person no imagination to conceive.

When I was seven years old, I was told one morning, with considerable domestic acclamation, that Aunt Mary was coming to make us a visit; and so, when the carriage that brought her stopped at our door, I pulled off my dirty apron, and ran in among the crowd of brothers and sisters to see what was coming. I shall not describe her first appearance, for, as I think of her, I begin to grow somewhat sentimental, in spite of my spectacles, and might, perhaps, talk a little nonsense.

Perhaps every man, whether married or unmarried, who has lived to the age of fifty or thereabouts, has seen some woman who, in his mind, is *the* woman, in distinction from all others. She may not have been a relative; she may not have been a wife; she may simply have shone on him from afar; she may be remembered in the distance of years as a star that is set, as music that is hushed, as beauty and loveliness faded forever; but remembered she is with interest, with fervor, with enthusiasm; with all that heart can feel, and more than words can tell. To me there has been but one such, and that is she whom I describe. "Was she beautiful?" you ask. I also will ask you one question: "If an angel from heaven should dwell in human form, and animate any human face, would not that face be lovely? It might not be beautiful, but would it not be lovely?" She was not beautiful except after this fashion.

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How well I remember her, as she used sometimes to sit thinking, with her head resting on her hand, her face mild and placid, with a quiet October sunshine in her blue eyes, and an ever-present smile over her whole countenance. I remember the sudden sweetness of look when any one spoke to her; the prompt attention, the quick comprehension of things before you uttered them, the obliging readiness to leave for you whatever she was doing.

To those who mistake occasional pensiveness for melancholy, it might seem strange to say that my Aunt Mary was always happy. Yet she was so. Her spirits never rose to buoyancy, and never sunk to despondency. I know that it is an article in the sentimental confession of faith that such a character cannot be interesting. For this impression there is some ground. The placidity of a medium commonplace mind is uninteresting, but the placidity of a strong and well-governed one borders on the sublime. Mutability of emotion characterizes inferior orders of being; but He who combines all interest, all excitement, all perfection, is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." And if there be anything sublime in the idea of an almighty mind, in perfect peace itself, and, therefore, at leisure to bestow all its energies on the wants of others, there is at least a reflection of the same sublimity in the character of that human being who has so quieted and governed the world within, that nothing is left to absorb sympathy or distract attention from those around.

Such a woman was my Aunt Mary. Her placidity was not so much the result of temperament as of choice. She had every susceptibility of suffering incident to the noblest and most delicate construction of mind; but they had been so directed that, instead of concentrating thought on self, they had prepared her to understand and feel for others. She was, beyond all things else, a sympathetic person, and her character, like the green in a landscape, was less remark-

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able for what it was in itself than for its perfect and beautiful harmony with all the coloring and shading around it. Other women have had talents, others have been good; but no woman that ever I knew possessed goodness and talent in union with such an intuitive perception of feelings, and such a faculty of instantaneous adaptation to them. The most troublesome thing in this world is to be condemned to the society of a person who can never understand anything you say unless you say the whole of it, making your commas and periods as you go along; and the most desirable thing in the world is to live with a person who saves you all the trouble of talking, by knowing just what you mean before you begin to speak.

Something of this kind of talent I began to feel, to my great relief, when Aunt Mary came into the family. I remember the very first evening, as she sat by the hearth, surrounded by all the family, her eye glanced on me with an expression that let me know she *saw* me; and when the clock struck eight, and my mother proclaimed that it was my bedtime, my countenance fell as I moved sorrowfully from the back of her rocking-chair, and thought how many beautiful stories Aunt Mary would tell after I was gone to bed. She turned towards me with such a look of real understanding, such an evident insight into the case, that I went into banishment with a lighter heart than ever I did before. How very contrary is the obstinate estimate of the heart to the rational estimate of worldly wisdom! Are there not some who can remember when one word, one look, or even the withholding of a word, has drawn their heart more to a person than all the substantial favors in the world? By ordinary acceptation, substantial kindness respects the necessaries of animal existence; while those wants which are peculiar to mind, and will exist with it forever, by equally correct classification, are designated as sentimental ones, the supply of which, though it will excite

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more gratitude in fact, ought not to in theory. Before Aunt Mary had lived with us a month, I loved her beyond anybody in the world; and a utilitarian would have been amused in ciphering out the amount of favors which produced this result. It was a look — a word — a smile; it was that she seemed pleased with my new kite; that she rejoiced with me when I learned to spin a top; that she alone seemed to estimate my proficiency in playing ball and marbles; that she never looked at all vexed when I upset her workbox upon the floor; that she received all my awkward gallantry and maladroit helpfulness as if it had been in the best taste in the world; that when she was sick, she insisted on letting me wait on her, though I made my customary havoc among the pitchers and tumblers of her room, and displayed, through my zeal to please, a more than ordinary share of insufficiency for the station. She also was the only person that ever I *conversed* with, and I used to wonder how anybody who could talk all about matters and things with grown-up persons could talk so sensibly about marbles, and hoops, and skates, and all sorts of little-boy matters; and I will say, by the bye, that the same sort of speculation has often occurred to the minds of older people in connection with her. She knew the value of varied information in making a woman, not a pedant, but a sympathetic, companionable being; and such she was to almost every class of mind.

She had, too, the faculty of drawing others up to her level in conversation, so that I would often find myself going on in most profound style while talking with her, and would wonder, when I was through, whether I was really a little boy still.

When she had enlightened us many months, the time came for her to take leave, and she besought my mother to give me to her for company. All the family wondered what she could find to like in Henry; but if she did like me, it was no matter, and so was the case disposed of.

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From that time I lived with her, — and there are some persons who can make the word "live" signify much more than it commonly does, — and she wrought on my character all those miracles which benevolent genius can work. She quieted my heart, directed my feelings, unfolded my mind, and educated me, not harshly or by force, but as the blessed sunshine educates the flower, into full and perfect life; and when all that was mortal of her died to this world, her words and deeds of unutterable love shed a twilight around her memory that will fade only in the brightness of heaven.

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FRANKNESS

THERE is one kind of frankness, which is the result of perfect unsuspiciousness, and which requires a measure of ignorance of the world and of life: this kind appeals to our generosity and tenderness. There is another, which is the frankness of a strong but pure mind, acquainted with life, clear in its discrimination and upright in its intention, yet above disguise or concealment: this kind excites respect. The first seems to proceed simply from impulse, the second from impulse and reflection united; the first proceeds, in a measure, from ignorance, the second from knowledge; the first is born from an undoubting confidence in others, the second from a virtuous and well-grounded reliance on one's self.

Now, if you suppose that this is the beginning of a sermon or of a Fourth of July oration, you are very much mistaken, though, I must confess, it hath rather an uncertain sound. I merely prefaced it to a little sketch of character, which you may look at if you please, though I am not sure you will like it. It was said of Alice H. that she had the mind of a man, the heart of a woman, and the face of an angel — a combination that all my readers will think peculiarly happy. There never was a woman who was so unlike the mass of society in her modes of thinking and acting, yet so generally popular. But the most remarkable thing about her was her proud superiority to all disguise, in thought, word, and deed. She pleased you; for she spoke out a hundred things that you would conceal, and spoke them with a dignified assurance that made you wonder

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that you had ever hesitated to say them yourself. Nor did this unreserve appear like the weakness of one who could not conceal, or like a determination to make war on the forms of society. It was rather a calm, well-guided integrity, regulated by a just sense of propriety; knowing when to be silent, but speaking the truth when it spoke at all.

Her extraordinary frankness often beguiled superficial observers into supposing themselves fully acquainted with her long before they were so, as the beautiful transparency of some lakes is said to deceive the eye as to their depth; yet the longer you knew her, the more variety and compass of character appeared through the same transparent medium. But you may just visit Miss Alice for half an hour to-night, and judge for yourselves. You may walk into this little parlor. There sits Miss Alice on that sofa, sewing a pair of lace sleeves into a satin dress, in which peculiarly angelic employment she may persevere till we have finished another sketch.

Do you see that pretty little lady, with sparkling eyes, elastic form, and beautiful hand and foot, sitting opposite to her? She is a belle: the character is written in her face — it sparkles from her eye — it dimples in her smile, and pervades the whole woman.

But there — Alice has risen, and is gone to the mirror, and is arranging the finest auburn hair in the world in the most tasteful manner. The little lady watches every motion as comically as a kitten watches a pin-ball.

"It is all in vain to deny it, Alice — you are really anxious to look pretty this evening," said she.

"I certainly am," said Alice quietly.

"Aye, and you hope you shall please Mr. A. and Mr. B.," said the little accusing angel.

"Certainly I do," said Alice, as she twisted her fingers in a beautiful curl.

"Well, I would not tell of it, Alice, if I did."

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"Then you should not ask me," said Alice.

"I declare, Alice!"

"And what do you declare?"

"I never saw such a girl as you are!"

"Very likely," said Alice, stooping to pick up a pin.

"Well, for my part," said the little lady, "I never would take any pains to make anybody like me — particularly a gentleman."

"I would," said Alice, "if they would not like me without."

"Why, Alice! I should not think you were so fond of admiration."

"I like to be admired very much," said Alice, returning to the sofa, "and I suppose everybody else does."

"I don't care about admiration," said the little lady. "I would be as well satisfied that people should n't like me as that they should."

"Then, cousin, I think it 's a pity we all like you so well," said Alice, with a good-humored smile. If Miss Alice had penetration, she never made a severe use of it.

"But really, cousin," said the little lady, "I should not think such a girl as you would think anything about dress, or admiration, and all that."

"I don't know what sort of a girl you think I am," said Alice, "but, for my own part, I only pretend to be a common human being, and am not ashamed of common human feelings. If God has made us so that we love admiration, why should we not honestly say so? I love it — you love it — everybody loves it; and why should not everybody say it?"

"Why, yes," said the little lady, "I suppose everybody has a — has a — a general love for admiration. I am willing to acknowledge that I have; but"—

"But you have no love for it in particular," said Alice, "I suppose you mean to say; that it is just the way the

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matter is commonly disposed of. Everybody is willing to acknowledge a general wish for the good opinion of others, but half the world are ashamed to own it when it comes to a particular case. Now I have made up my mind that if it is correct in general, it is correct in particular; and I mean to own it both ways."

"But, somehow, it seems mean," said the little lady.

"It is mean to live for it, to be selfishly engrossed in it, but not mean to enjoy it when it comes, or even to seek it, if we neglect no higher interest in doing so. All that God made us to feel is dignified and pure, unless we pervert it."

"But, Alice, I never heard any person speak out so frankly as you do."

"Almost all that is innocent and natural may be spoken out; and as for that which is not innocent and natural, it ought not even be thought."

"But can everything be spoken that may be thought?" said the lady.

"No; we have an instinct which teaches us to be silent sometimes; but, if we speak at all, let it be in simplicity and sincerity."

"Now, for instance, Alice," said the lady, "it is very innocent and natural, as you say, to think this, that, and the other nice thing of yourself, especially when everybody is telling you of it; now would you speak the truth if any one asked you on this point?"

"If it were a person who had a right to ask, and if it were a proper time and place, I would," said Alice.

"Well, then," said the bright lady, "I ask you, Alice, in this very proper time and place, do you think that you are handsome?"

"Now, I suppose you expect me to make a courtesy to every chair in the room before I answer," said Alice; "but, dispensing with that ceremony, I will tell you fairly, I think I am."

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"Do you think that you are good?"

"Not entirely," said Alice.

"Well, but don't you think you are better than most people?"

"As far as I can tell, I think I am better than some people; but really, cousin, I don't trust my own judgment in this matter," said Alice.

"Well, Alice, one more question. Do you think James Martyrs likes you or me best?"

"I do not know," said Alice.

"I did not ask you what you knew, but what you thought," said the lady; "you must have some thought about it."

"Well, then, I think he likes me best," said Alice.

Just then the door opened, and in walked the identical James Martyrs. Alice blushed, looked a little comical, and went on with her sewing, while the little lady began, —

"Really, Mr. James, I wish you had come a minute sooner, to hear Alice's confessions."

"What has she confessed?" said James.

"Why, that she is handsomer and better than most folks."

"That 's nothing to be ashamed of," said James.

"Oh, that 's not all; she wants to look pretty, and loves to be admired, and all" —

"It sounds very much like her," said James, looking at Alice.

"Oh, but besides that," said the lady, "she has been preaching a discourse in justification of vanity and self-love" —

"And next time you shall take notes when I preach," said Alice, "for I don't think your memory is remarkably happy."

"You see, James," said the lady, "that Alice makes it a point to say exactly the truth when she speaks at all, and I 've been puzzling her with questions. I really wish you

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would ask her some, and see what she will say. But, mercy! there is Uncle C. come to take me to ride. I must run." And off flew the little humming-bird, leaving James and Alice tête-à-tête.

"There really is one question" — said James, clearing his voice.

Alice looked up.

"There is one question, Alice, which I wish you would answer."

Alice did not inquire what the question was, but began to look very solemn; and just then the door was shut, and so I never knew what the question was, — only I observed that James Martyrs seemed in some seventh heaven for a week afterwards, and — and — you can finish for yourself, lady.

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COUSIN WILLIAM

In a stately red house, in one of the villages of New England, lived the heroine of our story. She had every advantage of rank and wealth, for her father was a deacon of the church, and owned sheep, and oxen, and exceeding much substance. There was an appearance of respectability and opulence about all the demesnes. The house stood almost concealed amid a forest of apple-trees, in spring blushing with blossoms, and in autumn golden with fruit. And near by might be seen the garden, surrounded by a red picket fence, inclosing all sorts of magnificence. There, in autumn, might be seen abundant squash vines, which seemed puzzled for room where to bestow themselves; and bright golden squashes, and full-orbed yellow pumpkins, looking as satisfied as the evening sun when he has just had his face washed in a shower, and is sinking soberly to bed. There were superannuated seed cucumbers, enjoying the pleasures of a contemplative old age; and Indian corn, nicely done up in green silk, with a specimen tassel hanging at the end of each ear. The beams of the summer sun darted through rows of crimson currants abounding on bushes by the fence, while a sulky black currant bush sat scowling in one corner, a sort of garden curiosity.

But time would fail us were we to enumerate all the wealth of Deacon Israel Taylor. He himself belonged to that necessary class of beings, who, though remarkable for nothing at all, are very useful in filling up the links of society. Far otherwise was his sister-in-law, Mrs. Abigail Evetts, who, on the demise of the deacon's wife, had assumed the reins of government in the household.

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This lady was of the same opinion that has animated many illustrious philosophers, namely, that the affairs of this world need a great deal of seeing to in order to have them go on prosperously; and although she did not, like them, engage in the supervision of the universe, she made amends by unremitting diligence in the department under her care. In her mind there was an evident necessity that every one should be up and doing: Monday, because it was washing-day; Tuesday, because it was ironing-day; Wednesday, because it was baking day; Thursday, because to-morrow was Friday; and so on to the end of the week. Then she had the care of reminding all in the house of everything each was to do from week's end to week's end; and she was so faithful in this respect, that scarcely an original act of volition took place in the family. The poor deacon was reminded when he went out and when he came in, when he sat down and when he rose up, so that an act of omission could only have been committed through sheer malice prepense.

But the supervision of a whole family of children afforded to a lady of her active turn of mind more abundant matter of exertion. To see that their faces were washed, their clothes mended, and their catechism learned; to see that they did not pick the flowers, nor throw stones at the chickens, nor sophisticate the great house dog, was an accumulation of care that devolved almost entirely on Mrs. Abigail, so that, by her own account, she lived and throve by a perpetual miracle.

The eldest of her charge, at the time this story begins, was a girl just arrived at young ladyhood, and her name was Mary. Now we know that people very seldom have stories written about them who have not sylph-like forms and glorious eyes, or, at least, "a certain inexpressible charm diffused over their whole person." But stories have of late so much abounded that they actually seem to have used up

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all the eyes, hair, teeth, lips, and forms necessary for a heroine, so that no one can now pretend to find an original collection wherewith to set one forth. These things considered, I regard it as fortunate that my heroine was not a beauty. She looked neither like a sylph, nor an oread, nor a fairy; she had neither *l'air distingué* nor *l'air magnifique*, but bore a great resemblance to a real mortal girl, such as you might pass a dozen of without any particular comment — one of those appearances which, though common as water, may, like that, be colored any way by the associations you connect with it. Accordingly, a faultless taste in dress, a perfect ease and gayety of manner, a constant flow of kindly feeling, seemed in her case to produce all the effect of beauty. Her manners had just dignity enough to repel impertinence without destroying the careless freedom and sprightliness in which she commonly indulged. No person had a merrier run of stories, songs, and village traditions, and all those odds and ends of character which form the materials for animated conversation. She had read, too, everything she could find: Rollin's History, and Scott's Family Bible, that stood in the glass bookcase in the best room, and an odd volume of Shakespeare, and now and then one of Scott's novels, borrowed from a somewhat literary family in the neighborhood. She also kept an album to write her thoughts in, and was in a constant habit of cutting out all the pretty poetry from the corners of the newspapers, besides drying forget-me-nots and rosebuds in memory of different particular friends, with a number of other little sentimental practices to which young ladies of sixteen and thereabout are addicted. She was also endowed with great constructiveness; so that, in these days of ladies' fairs, there was nothing from bellows-needlebooks down to web-footed pincushions to which she could not turn her hand. Her sewing certainly *was* extraordinary (we think too little is made of this in the accomplishments of heroines); her stitch-

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ing was like rows of pearls, and her cross-stitching was fairy-like; and for sewing over and over, as the village school-ma'am hath it, she had not her equal. And what shall we say of her pies and puddings? They would have converted the most reprobate old bachelor in the world. And then her sweeping and dusting! "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all!"

And now, what do you suppose is coming next? Why, a young gentleman, of course; for about this time comes to settle in the village, and take charge of the academy, a certain William Barton. Now, if you wish to know more particularly who he was, we only wish we could refer you to Mrs. Abigail, who was most accomplished in genealogies and old wives' fables, and she would have told you that "her gran'ther, Ike Evetts, married a wife who was second cousin to Peter Scranton, who was great-uncle to Polly Moseley, whose daughter Mary married William Barton's father, just about the time old Squire Peter's house was burned down." And then would follow an account of the domestic history of all branches of the family since they came over from England. Be that as it may, it is certain that Mrs. Abigail denominated him cousin, and that he came to the deacon's to board; and he had not been there more than a week, and made sundry observations on Miss Mary, before he determined to call her cousin, too, which he accomplished in the most natural way in the world.

Mary was at first somewhat afraid of him, because she had heard that he had studied through all that was to be studied in Greek, and Latin, and German too; and she saw a library of books in his room, that made her sigh every time she looked at them, to think how much there was to be learned of which she was ignorant. But all this wore away, and presently they were the best friends in the world. He gave her books to read, and he gave her lessons in French, nothing puzzled by that troublesome verb which

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must be first conjugated, whether in French, Latin, or English. Then he gave her a deal of good advice about the cultivation of her mind and the formation of her character, all of which was very improving, and tended greatly to consolidate their friendship. But, unfortunately for Mary, William made quite as favorable an impression on the female community generally as he did on her, having distinguished himself on certain public occasions, such as delivering lectures on botany, and also, at the earnest request of the Fourth of July committee, pronounced an oration which covered him with glory. He had been known, also, to write poetry, and had a retired and romantic air greatly bewitching to those who read Bulwer's novels. In short, it was morally certain, according to all rules of evidence, that if he had chosen to pay any lady of the village a dozen visits a week, she would have considered it as her duty to entertain him.

William did visit; for, like many studious people, he found a need for the excitement of society; but, whether it was party or singing-school, he walked home with Mary, of course, in as steady and domestic a manner as any man who has been married a twelvemonth. His air in conversing with her was inevitably more confidential than with any other one, and this was cause for envy in many a gentle breast, and an interesting diversity of reports with regard to her manner of treating the young gentleman went forth into the village.

"I wonder Mary Taylor will laugh and joke so much with William Barton in company," said one. "Her manners are altogether too free," said another. "It is evident she has designs upon him," remarked a third. "And she cannot even conceal it," pursued a fourth.

Some sayings of this kind at length reached the ears of Mrs. Abigail, who had the best heart in the world, and was so indignant that it might have done your heart good to see

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her. Still she thought it showed that "the girl needed advising;" and "she should talk to Mary about the matter."

But she first concluded to advise with William on the subject; and, therefore, after dinner the same day, while he was looking over a treatise on trigonometry or conic sections, she commenced upon him: —

"Our Mary is growing up a fine girl."

William was intent on solving a problem, and only understanding that something had been said, mechanically answered "Yes."

"A little wild or so," said Mrs. Abigail.

"I know it," said William, fixing his eyes earnestly on E, F, B, C.

"Perhaps you think her a little too talkative and free with you sometimes; you know girls do not always think what they do."

"Certainly," said William, going on with his problem.

"I think you had better speak to her about it," said Mrs. Abigail.

"I think so too," said William, musing over his completed work, till at length he arose, put it in his pocket, and went to school.

Oh, this unlucky concentrativeness! How many shocking things a man may indorse by the simple habit of saying "Yes" and "No," when he is not hearing what is said to him.

The next morning, when William was gone to the academy, and Mary was washing the breakfast things, Aunt Abigail introduced the subject with great tact and delicacy by remarking, —

"Mary, I guess you had better be rather less free with William than you have been."

"Free!" said Mary, starting, and nearly dropping the cup from her hand; "why, aunt, what do you mean?"

"Why, Mary, you must not always be around so free in

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talking with him, at home, and in company, and everywhere. It won't do." The color started into Mary's cheek, and mounted even to her forehead, as she answered with a dignified air, —

"I have not been too free; I know what is right and proper; I have not been doing anything that was improper."

Now, when one is going to give advice, it is very troublesome to have its necessity thus called in question; and Mrs. Abigail, who was fond of her own opinion, felt called upon to defend it.

"Why, yes, you have, Mary; everybody in the village notices it."

"I don't care what everybody in the village says. I shall always do what I think proper," retorted the young lady; "I know Cousin William does not think so."

"Well, I think he does, from some things I have heard him say."

"Oh, aunt! what have you heard him say?" said Mary, nearly upsetting a chair in the eagerness with which she turned to her aunt.

"Mercy on us! you need not knock the house down, Mary. I don't remember exactly about it, only that his way of speaking made me think so."

"Oh, aunt! do tell me what it was, and all about it," said Mary, following her aunt, who went around dusting the furniture.

Mrs. Abigail, like most obstinate people, who feel that they have gone too far, and yet are ashamed to go back, took refuge in an obstinate generalization, and only asserted that she had heard him say things, as if he did not quite like her ways. This is the most consoling of all methods in which to leave a matter of this kind for a person of active imagination. Of course, in five minutes, Mary had settled in her mind a list of remarks that would have been

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suited to any of her village companions, as coming from her cousin. All the improbability of the thing vanished in the absorbing consideration of its possibility; and, after a moment's reflection, she pressed her lips together in a very firm way, and remarked that "Mr. Barton would have no occasion to say such things again."

It was very evident, from her heightened color and dignified air, that her state of mind was very heroical. As for poor Aunt Abigail, she felt sorry she had vexed her, and addressed herself most earnestly to her consolation, remarking, "Mary, I don't suppose William meant anything. He knows you don't mean anything wrong."

"Don't mean anything wrong!" said Mary indignantly.

"Why, child, he thinks you don't know much about folks and things, and if you have been a little" —

"But I have not been. It was he that talked with me first. It was he that did everything first. He called me cousin — and he *is* my cousin."

"No, child, you are mistaken; for you remember his grandfather was" —

"I don't care who his grandfather was; he has no right to think of me as he does."

"Now, Mary, don't go to quarreling with him; he can't help his thoughts, you know."

"I don't care what he thinks," said Mary, flinging out of the room with tears in her eyes.

Now, when a young lady is in such a state of affliction, the first thing to be done is to sit down and cry for two hours or more, which Mary accomplished in the most thorough manner; in the mean while making many reflections on the instability of human friendships, and resolving never to trust any one again as long as she lived, and thinking that this was a cold and hollow-hearted world, together with many other things she had read in books, but never realized so forcibly as at present. But what was to be done? Of

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course she did not wish to speak a word to William again, and wished he did not board there; and finally she put on her bonnet, and determined to go over to her other aunt's in the neighborhood, and spend the day, so that she might not see him at dinner.

But it so happened that Mr. William, on coming home at noon, found himself unaccountably lonesome during school recess for dinner, and hearing where Mary was, determined to call after school at night at her aunt's, and attend her home. Accordingly, in the afternoon, as Mary was sitting in the parlor with two or three cousins, Mr. William entered. Mary was so anxious to look just as if nothing was the matter, that she turned away her head, and began to look out of the window just as the young gentleman came up to speak to her. So, after he had twice inquired after her health, she drew up very coolly, and said, —

"Did you speak to me, sir?"

William looked a little surprised at first, but seating himself by her, "To be sure," said he; "and I came to know why you ran away without leaving any message for me?"

"It did not occur to me," said Mary, in the dry tone which, in a lady, means, "I will excuse you from any further conversation, if you please." William felt as if there was something different from common in all this, but thought that perhaps he was mistaken, and so continued: —

"What a pity, now, that you should be so careless of me, when I was so thoughtful of you! I have come all this distance to see how you do."

"I am sorry to have given you the trouble," said Mary.

"Cousin, are you unwell to-day?" said William.

"No, sir," said Mary, going on with her sewing.

There was something so marked and decisive in all this that William could scarcely believe his ears. He turned away and commenced a conversation with a young lady;

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and Mary, to show that she could talk if she chose, commenced relating a story to her cousins, and presently they were all in a loud laugh.

"Mary has been full of her knick-knacks to-day," said her old uncle, joining them.

William looked at her: she never seemed brighter or in better spirits, and he began to think that even Cousin Mary might puzzle a man sometimes.

He turned away, and began a conversation with old Mr. Zachary Coan on the raising of buckwheat — a subject which evidently required profound thought, for he never looked more grave, not to say melancholy.

Mary glanced that way, and was struck with the sad and almost severe expression with which he was listening to the details of Mr. Zachary, and was convinced that he was no more thinking of buckwheat than she was.

"I never thought of hurting his feelings so much," said she, relenting; "after all, he has been very kind to me. But he might have told me about it, and not somebody else." And hereupon she cast another glance towards him.

William was not talking, but sat with his eyes fixed on the snuffer-tray, with an intense gravity of gaze that quite troubled her, and she could not help again blaming herself.

"To be sure! Aunt was right; he could not help his thoughts. I will try to forget it," thought she.

Now, you must not think Mary was sitting still and gazing during this soliloquy. No, she was talking and laughing, apparently the most unconcerned spectator in the room. So passed the evening till the little company broke up.

"I am ready to attend you home," said William, in a tone of cold and almost haughty deference.

"I am obliged to you," said the young lady, in a similar tone, "but I shall stay all night;" then, suddenly changing her tone, she said, "No, I cannot keep it up any longer. I will go home with you, Cousin William."

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"Keep up what?" said William, with surprise.

Mary was gone for her bonnet. She came out, took his arm, and walked on a little way.

"You have advised me always to be frank, cousin," said Mary, "and I must and will be; so I shall tell you all, though I dare say it is not according to rule."

"All what?" said William.

"Cousin," said she, not at all regarding what he said, "I was very much vexed this afternoon."

"So I perceived, Mary."

"Well, it is vexatious," she continued, "though, after all, we cannot expect people to think us perfect; but I did not think it quite fair in you not to tell *me*."

"Tell you what, Mary?"

Here they came to a place where the road turned through a small patch of woods. It was green and shady, and enlivened by a lively chatterbox of a brook. There was a mossy trunk of a tree that had fallen beside it, and made a pretty seat. The moonlight lay in little patches upon it, as it streamed down through the branches of the trees. It was a fairy-looking place, and Mary stopped and sat down, as if to collect her thoughts. After picking up a stick, and playing a moment in the water, she began: —

"After all, cousin, it was very natural in you to say so, if you thought so; though I should not have supposed you would think so."

"Well, I should be glad if I could know what it is," said William in a tone of patient resignation.

"Oh, I forgot that I had not told you," said she, pushing back her hat, and speaking like one determined to go through with the thing. "Why, cousin, I have been told that you spoke of my manners towards yourself as being freer — more — obtrusive than they should be. And now," said she, her eyes flashing, "you see it was not a very easy thing to tell you, but I began with being frank, and I will be so, for the sake of satisfying myself."

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To this William simply replied, "Who told you this, Mary?"

"My aunt."

"Did she say I said it to her?"

"Yes; and I do not so much object to your saying it as to your thinking it, for you know I did not force myself on your notice; it was you who sought my acquaintance and won my confidence; and that you, above all others, should think of me in this way!"

"I never did think so, Mary," said William quietly.

"Nor ever said so?"

"Never. I should think you might have known it, Mary."

"But" — said Mary.

"But," said William firmly, "Aunt Abigail is certainly mistaken."

"Well, I am glad of it," said Mary, looking relieved, and gazing in the brook. Then looking up with warmth, "And, cousin, you never must think so. I am ardent, and I express myself freely; but I never meant — I am sure I never should mean — anything more than a sister might say."

"And are you sure you never could, if all my happiness depended on it, Mary?"

She turned and looked up in his face, and saw a look that brought conviction. She rose to go on, and her hand was taken and drawn into the arm of her cousin, and that was the end of the first and the last difficulty that ever arose between them.

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MRS. A. AND MRS. B.

OR, WHAT SHE THINKS ABOUT IT

Mrs. A. and Mrs. B. were next-door neighbors and intimate friends — that is to say, they took tea with each other very often, and, in confidential strains, discoursed of stockings and pocket-handkerchiefs, of puddings and carpets, of cookery and domestic economy, through all its branches.

"I think, on the whole," said Mrs. A., with an air of profound reflection, "that gingerbread is the cheapest and healthiest cake one can make. I make a good deal of it, and let my children have as much as they want of it."

"I used to do so," said Mrs. B., "but I have n't had any made these two months."

"Ah! Why not?" said Mrs. A.

"Why, it is some trouble; and then, though it is cheap, it is cheaper not to have any; and on the whole, the children are quite as well contented without it, and so we are fallen into the way of not having any."

"But one must keep some kind of cake in the house," said Mrs. A.

"So I have always heard, and thought, and practiced," said Mrs. B.; "but really of late I have questioned the need of it."

The conversation gradually digressed from this point into various intricate speculations on domestic economy, and at last each lady went home to put her children to bed.

A fortnight after, the two ladies were again in conclave

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at Mrs. B.'s tea-table, which was graced by some unusually nice gingerbread.

"I thought you had given up making gingerbread," said Mrs. A.; "you told me so a fortnight ago at my house."

"So I had," said Mrs. B.; "but since that conversation I have been making it again."

"Why so?"

"Oh, I thought that since you thought it economical enough, certainly I might; and that if you thought it necessary to keep some sort of cake in the closet, perhaps it was best I should."

Mrs. A. laughed.

"Well, now," said she, "I have *not* made any gingerbread, or cake of any kind, since that same conversation."

"Indeed?"

"No. I said to myself, if Mrs. B. thinks it will do to go without cake in the house, I suppose I might, as she says it is some additional expense and trouble; and so I gave it up."

Both ladies laughed, and you laugh, too, my dear lady reader; but have you never done the same thing? Have you never altered your dress, or your arrangements, or your housekeeping because somebody else was of a different way of thinking or managing — and may not that very somebody at the same time have been moved to make some change through a similar observation on you?

A large party is to be given by the young lads of N. to the young lassies of the same place; they are to drive out together to a picnic in the woods, and to come home by moonlight; the weather is damp and uncertain, the ground chill, and young people, as in all ages before the flood and since, not famous for the grace of prudence; for all which reasons, almost every mamma hesitates about her daughters' going — thinks it a very great pity the thing has been started.

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"I really don't like this thing," says Mrs. G.; "it's not a kind of thing that I approve of, and if Mrs. X. was not going to let her daughters go, I should set myself against it. How Mrs. X., who is so very nice in her notions, can sanction such a thing, I cannot see. I am really surprised at Mrs. X."

All this time, poor unconscious Mrs. X. is in a similar tribulation.

"This is a very disagreeable affair to me," she says. "I really have almost a mind to say that my girls shall not go; but Mrs. G.'s daughters are going, and Mrs. C.'s and Mrs. W.'s, and of course it would be idle for me to oppose it. I should not like to cast any reflections on a course sanctioned by ladies of such prudence and discretion."

In the same manner Mrs. A., B., and C., and the good matrons through the alphabet generally, with doleful lamentations, each one consents to the thing that she allows not, and the affair proceeds swimmingly, to the great satisfaction of the juveniles. Now and then, it is true, some individual sort of body, who might be designated by the angular and decided letters K or L, says to her son or daughter: "No. I don't approve of the thing," and is deaf to the oft-urged, "Mrs. A., B., and C. do so."

"I have nothing to do with Mrs. A., B., and C.'s arrangements," says this impracticable Mrs. K. or L. "I only know what is best for my children, and they shall not go."

Again, Mrs. G. is going to give a party; and, now, shall she give wine, or not? Mrs. G. has heard an abundance of temperance speeches and appeals, heard the duties of ladies in the matter of sanctioning temperance movements aptly set forth, but "none of these things move her half so much as another consideration." She has heard that Mrs. D. introduced wine into her last soirée. Mrs. D.'s husband has been a leading orator of the temperance society, and Mrs. D. is no less a leading member in the circles of fashion. Now,

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Mrs. G.'s soul is in great perplexity. If she only could be sure that the report about Mrs. D. is authentic, why, then, of course the thing is settled; regret it as much as she may, she cannot get through her party without the wine; and so at last come the party and the wine. Mrs. D., who was incorrectly stated to have had the article at her last soirée, has it at her next one, and quotes discreet Mrs. G. as her precedent. Mrs. P. is greatly scandalized at this, because Mrs. G. is a member of the church, and Mr. D. a leading temperance orator; but since they will do it, it is not for her to be nice, and so she follows the fashion.

Mrs. N. comes home from church on Sunday, rolling up her eyes with various appearances of horror and surprise.

"Well! I am going to give up trying to restrain my girls from dressing extravagantly; it 's of no use trying! — no use in the world."

"Why, mother, what 's the matter?" exclaimed the girls aforesaid, delighted to hear such encouraging declarations.

"Why, did n't you see Mrs. K.'s daughters sitting in the pew before us with feathers in their bonnets? If Mrs. K. is coming out in this way, I shall give up. I sha'n't try any longer. I am going to get just what I want, and dress as much as I 've a mind to. Girls, you may get those visites that you were looking at at Mr. B.'s store last week!"

The next Sunday, Mrs. K.'s girls in turn begin: —

"There, mamma, you are always lecturing us about economy, and all that, and wanting us to wear our old mantillas another winter, and there are Mrs. N.'s girls shining out in new visites."

Mamma looks sensible and judicious, and tells the girls they ought not to see what people are wearing in church on Sundays; but it becomes evident, before the week is through, that she has not forgotten the observation. She is anxiously pricing visites, and looking thoughtful as one on the eve of

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an important determination; and the next Sunday the girls appear in full splendor, with new visites, to the increasing horror of Mrs. N.

So goes the shuttlecock back and forward, kept up on both sides by most judicious hands.

In like manner, at a modern party, a circle of matrons sit in edifying conclave, and lament the degeneracy of the age.

"These parties that begin at nine o'clock and end at two or three in the morning are shameful things," says fat Mrs. Q., complacently fanning herself. (N. B. Mrs. Q. is plotting to have one the very next week, and has come just to see the fashions.)

"Oh, dreadful, dreadful!" exclaim, in one chorus, meek Mrs. M., and tall Mrs. F., and stiff Mrs. J.

"They are very unhealthy," says Mrs. F.

"They disturb all family order," says Mrs. J.

"They make one so sleepy the next day," says Mrs. M.

"They are very laborious to get up, and entirely useless," says Mrs. Q.; at the same time counting across the room the people that she shall invite next week.

Mrs. M. and Mrs. F. diverge into a most edifying strain of moral reflection on the improvement of time, the necessity of sobriety and moderation, the evils of conformity to the world, till one is tempted to feel that the tract society ought to have their remarks for general circulation, were one not damped by the certain knowledge that before the winter is out each of these ladies will give exactly such another party. And, now are all these respectable ladies hypocritical or insincere? By no means — they believe every word they say; but a sort of necessity is laid upon them — a spell; and before the breath of the multitude their individual resolution melts away as the frosty tracery melts from the window-panes of a crowded room. A great many do this habitually, resignedly, as a matter of course. Ask

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them what they think to be right and proper, and they will tell you sensibly, coherently, and quite to the point in one direction; ask them what they are going to do. Ah! that is quite another matter. They are going to do what is generally done — what Mrs. A., B., and C. do. They have long since made over their conscience to the keeping of the public, — that is to say, of good society, — and are thus rid of a troublesome burden of responsibility. Again, there are others who mean in general to have an opinion and will of their own; but, imperceptibly, as one and another take a course opposed to their own sense of right and propriety, their resolution quietly melts and melts, till every individual outline of it is gone, and they do as others do.

Yet is this influence of one human being over another — in some sense, God-appointed — a necessary result of the human constitution. There is scarcely a human being that is not varied and swerved by it, as the trembling needle is swerved by the approaching magnet. Oppose conflict with it, as one may at a distance, yet when it breathes on us through the breath, and shines on us through the eye of an associate, it possesses an invisible magnetic power. He who is not at all conscious of such impressibility can scarce be amiable or human. Nevertheless, one of the most important habits for the acquisition of a generous and noble character, is to learn to act individually, unswerved by the feelings and opinions of others. It may help us to do this, to reflect that the very person whose opinion we fear may be in equal dread of ours, and that the person to whom we are looking for a precedent may, at that very time, be looking to us.

In short, Mrs. A., if you think that you could spend your money more like a Christian than in laying it out on a fashionable party, go forward and do it, and twenty others, whose supposed opinion you fear, will be glad of your example for a precedent. And, Mrs. B., if you do think it

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would be better for your children to observe early hours, and form simple habits, than to dress and dance, and give and go to juvenile balls, carry out your opinion in practice, and many an anxious mother, who is of the same opinion, will quote your example as her shield and defense.

And for you, young ladies, let us pray you to reflect — individuality of character, maintained with womanly sweetness, is an irresistible grace and adornment. Have some principles of taste for yourself, and do not adopt every fashion of dress that is in vogue, whether it suits you or not, — whether it is becoming or not, — but, without a startling variation from general form, let your dress show something of your own taste and opinions. Have some principles of right and wrong for yourself, and do not do everything that every one else does, because every one else does it.

Nothing is more tedious than a circle of young ladies who have got by rote a certain set of phrases and opinions — all admiring in the same terms the same things, and detesting in like terms certain others — with anxious solicitude each dressing, thinking, and acting, one as much like another as is possible. A genuine original opinion, even though it were so heretical as to assert that Jenny Lind is a little lower than the angels, or that Shakespeare is rather dull reading, would be better than such a universal Dead Sea of acquiescence.

These remarks have borne reference to the female sex principally, because they are the dependent, the acquiescent sex — from nature, and habit, and position, most exposed to be swayed by opinion — and yet, too, in a certain very wide department they are the lawgivers and custom-makers of society. If, amid the multiplied schools, whose advertisements now throng our papers, purporting to teach girls everything, both ancient and modern, high and low, from playing on the harp and working pincushions, up to civil engineering, surveying, and navigation, there were any

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which could teach them to be women — to have thoughts, opinions, and modes of action of their own — such a school would be worth having. If one half of the good purposes which are in the hearts of the ladies of our nation were only acted out without fear of anybody's opinion, we should certainly be a step nearer the millennium.

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WHICH IS THE LIBERAL MAN

It was a beaming and beautiful summer morning, and the little town of V. was alive with all the hurry and motion of a college commencement. Rows of carriages lined the rural streets, and groups of well-dressed auditors were thronging to the hall of exhibition. All was gayety and animation. And among them all what heart beat higher with hope and gratified ambition than that of James Stanton? Young, buoyant, prepossessing in person and manners, he was this day, in the presence of all the world, to carry off the highest palm of scholarship in his institution, and to receive, on the threshold of the great world, the utmost that youthful ambition can ask before it enters the arena of actual life. Did not his pulse flutter, and his heart beat thick, when he heard himself announced in the crowded house as the valedictorian of the day? when he saw aged men, and fair, youthful faces, ruddy childhood, and sober, calculating manhood alike bending in hushed and eager curiosity, to listen to his words? Nay, did not his heart rise in his throat as he caught the gleam of his father's eye, while, bending forward on his staff, with white, reverend locks falling about his face, he listened to the voice of his pride — his firstborn? And did he not see the glistening tears in his mother's eye, as with rapt ear she hung upon his every word? Ah, the young man's first triumph! When, full of confidence and hope, he enters the field of life, all his white glistening as yet unsoiled by the dust of the combat, the unproved world turning towards him with flatteries and promises in both hands, what other triumph

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does life give so fresh, so full, so replete with hope and joy? So felt James Stanton this day, when he heard his father congratulated on having a son of such promise; when old men, revered for talents and worth, shook hands with him, and bade him warmly Godspeed in the course of life; when bright eyes cast glances of favor, and from among the fairest were overheard whispers of admiration.

"Your son is designed for the bar, I trust," said the venerable Judge L. to the father of James, at the commencement dinner. "I have seldom seen a turn of mind better fitted for success in the legal profession. And then his voice! his manner! let him go to the bar, sir, and I prophesy that he will yet outdo us all."

And this was said in James's hearing, and by one whose commendation was not often so warmly called forth. It was not in any young heart not to beat quicker at such prospects. Honor, station, wealth, political ambition, all seemed to offer themselves to his grasp; but long ere this, in the solitude of retirement, in the stillness of prayer and self-examination, the young graduate had vowed himself to a different destiny; and if we may listen to a conversation, a few evenings after commencement, with a classmate, we shall learn more of the secret workings of his mind.

"And so, Stanton," said George Lennox to him, as they sat by their evening fireside, "you have not yet decided whether to accept Judge L.'s offer or not."

"I have decided that matter long ago," said James.

"So, then, you choose the ministry."

"Yes."

"Well, for my part," replied George Lennox, "I choose the law. There must be Christians, you know, in every vocation; the law seems to suit my turn of mind. I trust it will be my effort to live as becomes a Christian, whatever be my calling."

"I trust so," replied James.

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"But really, Stanton," added the other, after some thought, "it seems a pity to cast away such prospects as open before you. You know your tuition is offered gratis; and then the patronage of Judge L., and such influences as he can command to secure your success — pray, do not these things seem to you like a providential indication that the law is to be your profession? Besides, here in these New England States, the ministry is overflowed already — ministers enough, and too many, if one may judge by the number of applicants for every unoccupied place."

"Nay," replied James, "my place is not here. I know, if all accounts are true, that my profession is not overflowed in our Western States, and there I mean to go."

"And is it possible that you can contemplate such an entire sacrifice of your talents, your manners, your literary and scientific tastes, your capabilities for refined society, as to bury yourself in a log cabin in one of our new States? You will never be appreciated there; your privations and sacrifices will be entirely disregarded, and you placed on a level with the coarsest and most uneducated sectaries. I really do not think you are called to this."

"Who, then, is called?" replied James.

"Why, men with much less of all these good things — men with real coarse, substantial, backwoods furniture in their minds, who will not appreciate, and of course not feel, the want of all the refinements and comforts which you must sacrifice."

"And are there enough such men ready to meet the emergencies in our western world, so that no others need be called upon?" replied James. "Men of the class you speak of may do better than I; but, if after all their efforts I still am needed, and can work well, ought I not to go? Must those only be drafted for religious enterprises to whom they involve no sacrifice?"

"Well, for my part," replied the other, "I trust I am

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willing to do anything that is my duty; yet I never could feel it to be my duty to bury myself in a new State, among stumps and log cabins. My mind would rust itself out; and, missing the stimulus of such society as I have been accustomed to, I should run down completely, and be useless in body and in mind."

"If you feel so, it would be so," replied James. "If the work there to be done would not be stimulus and excitement enough to compensate for the absence of all other stimulus, — if the business of the ministry, the saving of human souls, is not the one all-absorbing purpose, and desire, and impulse of the whole being, — then woe to the man who goes to preach the gospel where there is nothing but human souls to be gained by it."

"Well, Stanton," replied the other, after a pause of some seriousness, "I cannot say that I have attained to this yet. I don't know but I might be brought to it; but at present I must confess it is not so. We ought not to rush into a state and employment which we have not the moral fortitude to sustain well. In short, for myself, I may make a respectable, and, I trust, not useless man in the law, when I could do nothing in the circumstances which you choose. However, I respect your feelings, and heartily wish that I could share them myself."

A few days after this conversation the young friends parted for their several destinations — the one to a law school, the other to a theological seminary.

It was many years after this that a middle-aged man, of somewhat threadbare appearance and restricted traveling conveniences, was seen carefully tying his horse at the outer inclosure of an elegant mansion in the town of ——, in one of our Western States; which being done, he eyed the house rather inquisitively, as people sometimes do when they are doubtful as to the question of entering or not

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entering. The house belonged to George Lennox, Esq., a lawyer reputed to be doing a more extensive business than any other in the State, and the threadbare gentleman who plies the knocker at the front door is the Reverend Mr. Stanton, a name widely spread in the ecclesiastical circles of the land. The door opens, and the old college acquaintances meet with a cordial grasp of the hand, and Mr. Stanton soon finds himself pressed to the most comfortable accommodations in the warm parlor of his friend; and even the slight uneasiness which the wisest are not always exempt from, when conscious of a little shabbiness in exterior, was entirely dissipated by the evident cordiality of his reception. Since the conversation we have alluded to, the two friends pursued their separate courses with but few opportunities of personal intercourse. In the true zeal of the missionary James Stanton had thrown himself into the field, where it seemed hardest and darkest, and where labor seemed most needed. In neighborhoods without churches, without schoolhouses, without settled roads, among a population of disorganized and heterogeneous material, he had exhorted from house to house, labored individually with one after another, till he had, in place after place, brought together the elements of a Christian Church. Far from all ordinances, means of grace, or Christian brotherhood, or coöperation, he had seemed to himself to be merely the lonely, solitary "voice of one crying in the wilderness," as unassisted, and, to human view, as powerless. With poverty, and cold, and physical fatigue he had daily been familiar; and where no vehicle could penetrate the miry depths of the forest, where it was impracticable even to guide a horse, he had walked miles and miles, through mud and rain, to preach. With a wife in delicate health, and a young and growing family, he had more than once seen the year when fifty dollars was the whole amount of money that had passed through his hands; and the whole of the rest of his support had come in dis-

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connected contributions from one and another of his people. He had lived without books, without newspapers, except as he had found them by chance snatches here and there,[1] and felt, as one so circumstanced only can feel, the difficulty of maintaining intellectual vigor and energy in default of all those stimulants to which cultivated minds in more favorable circumstances are so much indebted. At the time that he is now introduced to the reader, he had been recently made pastor in one of the most important settlements in the State, and among those who, so far as worldly circumstances were concerned, were able to afford him a competent support. But among communities like those at the West, settled for expressly money-making purposes, and by those who have for years been taught the lesson to save, and have scarcely begun to feel the duty to give, a minister, however laborious, however eloquent and successful, may often feel the most serious embarrassments of poverty. Too often is his salary regarded as a charity which may be given or retrenched to suit every emergency of the times, and his family expenditures watched with a jealous and censorious eye.

On the other hand, George Lennox, the lawyer, had by his talents and efficiency placed himself at the head of his profession, and was realizing an income which brought all the comforts and elegances of life within his reach. He was a member of the Christian church in the place where he lived, irreproachable in life and conduct. From natural generosity of disposition, seconded by principle, he was a liberal contributor to all religious and benevolent enterprises, and was often quoted and referred to as an example in good works. Surrounded by an affectionate and growing family, with ample means for providing in the best manner both for their physical and mental development, he justly

[1] These particulars the writer heard stated personally as a part of the experience of one of the most devoted ministers of Ohio.

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regarded himself as a happy man, and was well satisfied with the world he lived in.

Now, there is nothing more trying to the Christianity or the philosophy which teaches the vanity of riches than a few hours' domestication in a family where wealth is employed, not for purposes of ostentation, but for the perfecting of home comfort and the gratification of refined intellectual tastes: and as Mr. Stanton leaned back, slippered and gowned, in one of the easiest of chairs, and began to look over periodicals and valuable new books from which he had long been excluded, he might be forgiven for giving a half sigh to the reflection that he could never be a rich man. "Have you read this review?" said his companion, handing him one of the leading periodicals of the day across the table.

"I seldom see reviews," said Mr. Stanton, taking it.

"You lose a great deal," replied the other, "if you have not seen those by this author — altogether the ablest series of literary efforts in our time. You clerical gentlemen ought not to sacrifice your literary tastes entirely to your professional cares. A moderate attention to current literature liberalizes the mind, and gives influence that you could not otherwise acquire."

"Literary taste is an expensive thing to a minister," said Mr. Stanton, smiling; "for the mind, as well as the body, we must forego all luxuries, and confine ourselves simply to necessaries."

"I would always indulge myself with books and periodicals, even if I had to scrimp elsewhere," said Mr. Lennox; and he spoke of scrimping with all the serious good faith with which people of two or three thousand a year usually speak of these matters.

Mr. Stanton smiled, and waived the subject, wondering mentally where his friend would find an elsewhere to scrimp, if he had the management of his concerns. The

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conversation gradually flowed back to college days and scenes, and the friends amused themselves with tracing the history of their various classmates.

"And so Alsop is in the Senate," said Mr. Stanton. "Strange! We did not at all expect it of him. But do you know anything of George Bush?"

"Oh, yes," replied the other; "he went into mercantile life, and the last I heard he had turned a speculation worth thirty thousand — a shrewd fellow. I always knew he would make his way in the world."

"But what has become of Langdon?"

"Oh, he is doing well; he is professor of languages in —— College, and I hear he has lately issued a Latin Grammar that promises to have quite a run."

"And Smithson?"

"Smithson has an office at Washington, and was there living in great style the last time I saw him."

It may be questioned whether the minister sank to sleep that night, amid the many comfortable provisions of his friend's guest chamber, without rebuking in his heart a certain rising of regret that he had turned his back on all the honors, and distinctions, and comforts which lay around the path of others, who had not, in the opening of the race, half the advantages of himself. "See," said the insidious voice; "what have you gained? See your early friends surrounded by riches and comfort, while you are pinched and harassed by poverty. Have they not, many of them, as good a hope of heaven as you have, and all this besides? Could you not have lived easier, and been a good man after all?" The reflection was only silenced by remembering that the only Being who ever had the perfect power of choosing his worldly condition, chose, of his own accord, a poverty deeper than that of any of his servants. Had Christ consented to be rich, what check could there have been to the desire of it among his followers? But he chose to stoop so low that

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none could be lower; and that in extremest want none could ever say, "I am poorer than was my Saviour and God."

The friends at parting the next morning shook hands warmly, and promised a frequent renewal of their resumed intercourse. Nor was the bill for twenty dollars, which the minister found in his hand, at all an unacceptable addition to the pleasures of his visit; and though the November wind whistled keenly through a dull, comfortless sky, he turned his horse's head homeward with a lightened heart.

"Mother's sick, and I 'm a-keeping house!" said a little flaxen-headed girl, in all the importance of seven years, as her father entered the dwelling.

"Your mother sick! what 's the matter?" inquired Mr. Stanton.

"She caught cold washing, yesterday, while you were gone;" and when the minister stood by the bedside of his sick wife, saw her flushed face, and felt her feverish pulse, he felt seriously alarmed. She had scarcely recovered from a dangerous fever when he left home, and with reason he dreaded a relapse.

"My dear, why have you done so?" was the first expostulation; "why did you not send for old Agnes to do your washing, as I told you?"

"I felt so well, I thought I was quite able," was the reply; "and you know it will take all the money we have now in hand to get the children's shoes before cold weather comes, and nobody knows when we shall have any more."

"Well, Mary, comfort your heart as to that. I have had a present to-day of twenty dollars — that will last us some time. God always provides when need is greatest." And so, after administering a little to the comfort of his wife, the minister addressed himself to the business of cooking something for dinner for himself and his little hungry flock.

"There is no bread in the house," he exclaimed, after a survey of the ways and means at his disposal.

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"I must try and sit up long enough to make some," said his wife faintly.

"You must try to be quiet," replied the husband. "We can do very well on potatoes. But yet," he added, "I think if I bring the things to your bedside, and you show me how to mix them, I could make some bread."

A burst of laughter from the young fry chorused his proposal; nevertheless, as Mr. Stanton was a man of decided genius, by help of much showing, and of strong arms and good will, the feat was at length accomplished in no unworkmanlike manner; and while the bread was put down to the fire to rise, and the potatoes were baking in the oven, Mr. Stanton having enjoined silence on his noisy troop, sat down, pencil in hand, by his wife's bed, to prepare a sermon. We would that those ministers who feel that they cannot compose without a study, and that the airiest and pleasantest room in the house, where the floor is guarded by the thick carpet, the light carefully relieved by curtains, where papers are filed and arranged neatly in conveniences purposely adjusted, with books of reference standing invitingly around, could once figure to themselves the process of composing a sermon in circumstances such as we have painted. Mr. Stanton had written his text, and jotted down something of an introduction, when a circumstance occurred which is almost inevitable in situations where a person has anything else to attend to — the baby woke. The little interloper was to be tied into a chair, while the flaxen-headed young housekeeper was now installed into the office of waiter in ordinary to her majesty, and by shaking a newspaper before her face, plying a rattle, or other arts known only to the initiate, to prevent her from indulging in any unpleasant demonstrations, while Mr. Stanton proceeded with his train of thought.

"Papa, papa! the teakettle! only look!" cried all the younger ones, just as he was again beginning to abstract his mind.

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Mr. Stanton rose, and adapting part of his sermon paper to the handle of the teakettle, poured the boiling water on some herb drink for his wife, and then recommenced.

"I sha'n't have much of a sermon!" he soliloquized, as his youngest but one, with the ingenuity common to children of her standing, had contrived to tip herself over in her chair, and cut her under lip, which for the time being threw the whole settlement into commotion; and this conviction was strengthened by finding that it was now time to give the children their dinner.

"I fear Mrs. Stanton is imprudent in exerting herself," said the medical man to the husband, as he examined her symptoms.

"I know she is," replied her husband, "but I cannot keep her from it."

"It is absolutely indispensable that she should rest and keep her mind easy," said the doctor.

"Rest and keep easy" — how easily the words are said; yet how they fall on the ear of a mother, who knows that her whole flock have not yet a garment prepared for winter, that hiring assistance is out of the question, and that the work must all be done by herself — who sees that while she is sick her husband is perplexed, and kept from his appropriate duties, and her children, despite his well-meant efforts, suffering for the want of those attentions that only a mother can give. Will not any mother, so tried, rise from her sick-bed before she feels able, to be again prostrated by over-exertion, until the vigor of the constitution year by year declines, and she sinks into an early grave? Yet this is the true history of many a wife and mother, who, in consenting to share the privations of a Western minister, has as truly sacrificed her life as did ever martyr on heathen shores. The graves of Harriet Newell and Mrs. Judson are hallowed as the shrines of saints, and their memory made as a watchword among Christians; yet the Western valley is full of

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green and nameless graves, where patient, long-enduring wives and mothers have lain down, worn out by the privations of as severe a missionary field, and "no man knoweth the place of their sepulchre."

The crisp air of a November evening was enlivened by the fire that blazed merrily in the bar-room of the tavern in L., while a more than usual number crowded about the hearth, owing to the session of the county court in that place.

"Mr. Lennox is a pretty smart lawyer," began an old gentleman, who sat in one of the corners, in the half interrogative tone which indicated a wish to start conversation.

"Yes, sir, no mistake about that," was the reply; "does the largest business in the State — very smart man, sir, and honest — a church member too, and one of the tallest kind of Christians they say — gives more money for building meeting-houses, and all sorts of religious concerns, than any man around."

"Well, he can afford it," said a man with a thin, caretaking visage, and a nervous, anxious twitch of the hand, as if it were his constant effort to hold on to something — "he can afford it, for he makes money hand over hand. It is not everybody can afford to do as he does."

A sly look of intelligence pervaded the company; for the speaker, one of the most substantial householders in the settlement, was always taken with distressing symptoms of poverty and destitution when any allusion to public or religious charity was made.

"Mr. C. is thinking about parish matters," said a wicked wag of the company; "you see, sir, our minister urged pretty hard last Sunday to have his salary paid up. He has had sickness in his family, and nothing on hand for winter expenses."

"I don't think Mr. Stanton is judicious in making such public statements," said the former speaker nervously;

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"he ought to consult his friends privately, and not bring temporalities into the pulpit."

"That is to say, starve decently, and make no fuss," replied the other.

"Nonsense! Who talks of starving, when provision is as plenty as blackberries? I tell you I understand this matter, and know how little a man can get along with. I've tried it myself. When I first set out in life, my wife and I had not a pair of andirons or a shovel and tongs for two or three years, and we never thought of complaining. The times are hard. We are all losing, and must get along as we can; and Mr. Stanton must bear some rubs as well as the rest of us."

"It appears to me, Mr. C.," said the waggish gentleman aforesaid, "that if you'd put Mr. Stanton into your good brick house, and give him your furniture and income, he would be well satisfied to rub along as you do."

"Mr. Stanton isn't so careful in his expenses as he might be," said Mr. C. petulantly, disregarding the idea started by his neighbor; "he buys things *I* should not think of buying. Now, I was in his house the other day, and he had just given three dollars for a single book."

"Perhaps it was a book he needed in his studies," suggested the old gentleman who began the conversation.

"What's the use of book-larnin' to a minister, if he's got the real spirit in him?" chimed in a rough-looking man in the farthest corner; "only wish you could have heard Elder North give it off — there was a real genuine preacher for you, could n't even read his text in the Bible; yet, sir, he would get up and reel it off as smooth and fast as the best of them that come out of the colleges. My notion is, it's the spirit that's the thing, after all."

Several of the auditors seemed inclined to express their approbation of this doctrine, though some remarked that Mr. Stanton was a smarter preacher than Elder North, for

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all his book-larnin'. Some of the more intelligent of the circle here exchanged smiles, but declined entering the lists in favor of "larnin'."

"Oh, for my part," resumed Mr. C., "I am for having a minister study, and have books and all that, if he can afford it, but in hard times like these, books are neither meat, drink, nor fire; and I know I can't afford them. Now, I'm as willing to contribute my part to the minister's salary, and every other charity, as anybody, when I can get money to do it, but in these times I can't get it."

The elderly gentleman here interrupted the conversation by saying abruptly, "I am a townsman of Mr. Stanton's, and it is my opinion that he has impoverished himself by giving in religious charity."

"Giving in charity!" exclaimed several voices; "where did he ever get anything to give?"

"Yet I think I speak within bounds," said the old gentleman, "when I say that he has given more than the amount of two thousand dollars yearly to the support of the gospel in this State; and I think I can show it to be so."

The eyes of the auditors were now enlarged to their utmost limits, while the old gentleman, after the fashion of shrewd old gentlemen generally, screwed up his mouth in a very dry twist, and looked in the fire without saying a word.

"Come now, pray tell us how this is," said several of the company.

"Well, sir," said the old man, addressing himself to Mr. C., "you are a man of business, and will perhaps understand the case as I view it. You were speaking this evening of Lawyer Lennox. He and your minister were both from my native place, and both there and in college your minister was always reckoned the smartest of the two, and went ahead in everything they undertook. Now, you see Mr. Lennox, out of his talents and education, makes say

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three thousand a year. Mr. Stanton had more talent, and more education, and might have made even more; but by devoting himself to the work of the ministry in your State, he gains, we will say, about four hundred dollars. Does he not, therefore, in fact, give all the difference between four hundred and three thousand to the cause of religion in this State? If, during the business season of the year, you, Mr. C., should devote your whole time to some benevolent enterprise, would you not feel that you had virtually given to that enterprise all the money you would otherwise have made? Instead, therefore, of calling it a charity for you to subscribe to your minister's support, you ought to consider it a very expensive charity for him to devote his existence in preaching to you. To bring the gospel to your State, he has given up a reasonable prospect of an income of two or three thousand, and contents himself with the least sum which will keep soul and body together, without the possibility of laying up a cent for his family in case of his sickness and death. This, sir, is what I call giving in charity."

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THE CANAL BOAT

Of all the ways of traveling which obtain among our locomotive nation, this said vehicle, the canal boat, is the most absolutely prosaic and inglorious. There is something picturesque, nay, almost sublime, in the lordly march of your well-built, high-bred steamboat. Go, take your stand on some overhanging bluff, where the blue Ohio winds its thread of silver, or the sturdy Mississippi tears its path through unbroken forests, and it will do your heart good to see the gallant boat walking the waters with unbroken and powerful tread; and, like some fabled monster of the wave, breathing fire, and making the shores resound with its deep respirations. Then there is something mysterious, even awful, in the power of steam. See it curling up against a blue sky, some rosy morning — graceful, floating, intangible, and to all appearance the softest and gentlest of all spiritual things; and then think that it is this fairy spirit that keeps all the world alive and hot with motion; think how excellent a servant it is, doing all sorts of gigantic works, like the genii of old; and yet, if you let slip the talisman only for a moment, what terrible advantage it will take of you! and you will confess that steam has some claims both to the beautiful and the terrible. For our own part, when we are down among the machinery of a steamboat in full play, we conduct ourselves very reverently, for we consider it as a very serious neighborhood; and every time the steam whizzes with such red-hot determination from the escape valve, we start as if some of the spirits were after us. But in a canal boat there is no power, no mystery, no danger; one cannot

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blow up, one cannot be drowned, unless by some special effort: one sees clearly all there is in the case — a horse, a rope, and a muddy strip of water — and that is all.

Did you ever try it, reader? If not, take an imaginary trip with us, just for experiment. "There 's the boat!" exclaims a passenger in the omnibus, as we are rolling down from the Pittsburgh Mansion House to the canal. "Where?" exclaim a dozen of voices, and forthwith a dozen heads go out of the window. "Why, down there, under that bridge; don't you see those lights?" "What! that little thing?" exclaims an inexperienced traveler; "dear me! we can't half of us get into it!" "We! indeed," says some old hand in the business; "I think you 'll find it will hold us and a dozen more loads like us." "Impossible!" say some. "You 'll see," say the initiated; and, as soon as you get out, you *do* see, and hear too, what seems like a general breaking loose from the Tower of Babel, amid a perfect hail-storm of trunks, boxes, valises, carpet-bags, and every describable and indescribable form of what a Westerner calls "plunder."

"That 's my trunk!" barks out a big, round man. "That 's my bandbox!" screams a heart-stricken old lady, in terror for her immaculate Sunday caps. "Where 's my little red box? I had two carpet-bags and a — My trunk had a scarle— Hallo! where are you going with that portmanteau? Husband! husband! do see after the large basket and the little hair trunk — oh, and the baby's little chair!" "Go below — go below, for mercy's sake, my dear; I 'll see to the baggage." At last, the feminine part of creation, perceiving that, in this particular instance, they gain nothing by public speaking, are content to be led quietly under hatches; and amusing is the look of dismay which each newcomer gives to the confined quarters that present themselves. Those who were so ignorant of the power of compression as to suppose the boat scarce large

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enough to contain them and theirs, find, with dismay, a respectable colony of old ladies, babies, mothers, big baskets, and carpet-bags already established. "Mercy on us!" says one, after surveying the little room, about ten feet long and six high, "where are we all to sleep to-night?" "Oh, me! what a sight of children!" says a young lady, in a despairing tone. "Poh!" says an initiated traveler; "children! scarce any here; let's see, — one; the woman in the corner, two; that child with the bread and butter, three; and then there's that other woman with two. Really, it's quite moderate for a canal boat. However, we can't tell till they have all come."

"All! for mercy's sake, you don't say there are any more coming!" exclaim two or three in a breath; "they can't come; there is not room!"

Notwithstanding the impressive utterance of this sentence, the contrary is immediately demonstrated by the appearance of a very corpulent, elderly lady, with three well-grown daughters, who come down looking about them most complacently, entirely regardless of the unchristian looks of the company. What a mercy it is that fat people are always good-natured!

After this follows an indiscriminate raining down of all shapes, sizes, sexes, and ages — men, women, children, babies, and nurses. The state of feeling becomes perfectly desperate. Darkness gathers on all faces. "We shall be smothered! we shall be crowded to death! we can't stay here!" are heard faintly from one and another; and yet, though the boat grows no wider, the walls no higher, they do live, and do stay there, in spite of repeated protestations to the contrary. Truly, as Sam Slick says, "there's a sight of wear in human natur'."

But, meanwhile, the children grow sleepy, and divers interesting little duets and trios arise from one part or another of the cabin.

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"Hush, Johnny! be a good boy," says a pale, nursing mamma, to a great, bristling, white-headed phenomenon, who is kicking very much at large in her lap.

"I won't be a good boy, neither," responds Johnny, with interesting explicitness; "I want to go to bed, and so-o-o-o!" and Johnny makes up a mouth as big as a teacup, and roars with good courage, and his mamma asks him "if he ever saw pa do so," and tells him that "he is mamma's dear, good little boy, and must not make a noise," with various observations of the kind, which are so strikingly efficacious in such cases. Meanwhile, the domestic concert in other quarters proceeds with vigor. "Mamma, I'm tired!" bawls a child. "Where's the baby's nightgown?" calls a nurse. "Do take Peter upon your lap, and keep him still." "Pray get out some biscuits to stop their mouths." Meanwhile, sundry babies strike in "con spirito," as the music books have it, and execute various flourishes; the disconsolate mothers sigh, and look as if all was over with them; and the young ladies appear extremely disgusted, and wonder "what business women have to be traveling round with babies."

To these troubles succeeds the turning-out scene, when the whole caravan is ejected into the gentlemen's cabin, that the beds may be made. The red curtains are put down, and in solemn silence all the last mysterious preparations begin. At length it is announced that all is ready. Forthwith the whole company rush back, and find the walls embellished by a series of little shelves, about a foot wide, each furnished with a mattress and bedding, and hooked to the ceiling by a very suspiciously slender cord. Direful are the ruminations and exclamations of inexperienced travelers, particularly young ones, as they eye these very equivocal accommodations, "What, sleep up there! I won't sleep on one of those top shelves, I know. The cords will certainly break." The chambermaid here takes up the conversation, and solemnly

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assures them that such an accident is not to be thought of at all; that it is a natural impossibility — a thing that could not happen without an actual miracle; and since it becomes increasingly evident that thirty ladies cannot all sleep on the lowest shelf, there is some effort made to exercise faith in this doctrine; nevertheless, all look on their neighbors with fear and trembling; and when the stout lady talks of taking a shelf, she is most urgently pressed to change places with her alarmed neighbor below. Points of location being after a while adjusted, comes the last struggle. Everybody wants to take off a bonnet or look for a shawl, to find a cloak, or get a carpet-bag, and all set about it with such zeal that nothing can be done. "Ma'am, you're on my foot!" says one. "Will you please to move, ma'am?" says somebody, who is gasping and struggling behind you. "Move!" you echo. "Indeed, I should be very glad to, but I don't see much prospect of it." "Chambermaid!" calls a lady, who is struggling among a heap of carpet-bags and children at one end of the cabin. "Ma'am!" echoes the poor chambermaid, who is wedged fast, in a similar situation, at the other. "Where's my cloak, chambermaid?" "I'd find it, ma'am, if I could move." "Chambermaid, my basket!" "Chambermaid, my parasol!" "Chambermaid, my carpet-bag!" "Mamma, they push me so!" "Hush, child, — crawl under there, and lie still till I can undress you." At last, however, the various distresses are over, the babies sink to sleep, and even that much-enduring being, the chambermaid, seeks out some corner for repose. Tired and drowsy, you are just sinking into a doze, when bang! goes the boat against the sides of a lock; ropes scrape, men run and shout, and up fly the heads of all the top shelfites, who are generally the more juvenile and airy part of the company.

"What's that! what's that!" flies from mouth to mouth, and forthwith they proceed to awaken their respective relations. "Mother! Aunt Hannah! do wake up; what is

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this awful noise?" "Oh, only a lock!" "Pray be still," groan out the sleepy members from below.

"A lock!" exclaim the vivacious creatures, ever on the alert for information; "and what is a lock, pray?"

"Don't you know what a lock is, you silly creatures? Do lie down and go to sleep."

"But say, there ain't any danger in a lock, is there?" respond the querists. "Danger!" exclaims a deaf old lady, poking up her head; "what's the matter? There hain't nothin' burst, has there?" "No, no, no!" exclaim the provoked and despairing opposition party, who find that there is no such thing as going to sleep till they have made the old lady below and the young ladies above understand exactly the philosophy of a lock. After a while the conversation again subsides; again all is still; you hear only the trampling of horses and the rippling of the rope in the water, and sleep again is stealing over you. You doze, you dream, and all of a sudden you are startled by a cry, "Chambermaid! wake up the lady that wants to be set ashore." Up jumps chambermaid, and up jump the lady and two children, and forthwith form a committee of inquiry as to ways and means. "Where's my bonnet?" says the lady, half awake, and fumbling among the various articles of that name. "I thought I hung it up behind the door." "Can't you find it?" says poor chambermaid, yawning and rubbing her eyes. "Oh, yes, here it is," says the lady; and then the cloak, the shawl, the gloves, the shoes, receive each a separate discussion. At last all seems ready, and they begin to move off, when, lo! Peter's cap is missing. "Now, where can it be?" soliloquizes the lady. "I put it right here by the table leg; maybe it got into some of the berths." At this suggestion, the chambermaid takes the candle, and goes round deliberately to every berth, poking the light directly in the face of every sleeper. "Here it is," she exclaims, pulling at something black under one pillow. "No, indeed, those are my

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shoes," says the vexed sleeper. "Maybe it 's here," she resumes, darting upon something dark in another berth. "No, that 's my bag," responds the occupant. The chambermaid then proceeds to turn over all the children on the floor, to see if it is not under them, in the course of which process they are most agreeably waked up and enlivened; and when everybody is broad awake, and most uncharitably wishing the cap, and Peter too, at the bottom of the canal, the good lady exclaims, "Well, if this is n't lucky; here I had it safe in my basket all the time!" And she departs amid the — what shall I say, execrations? — of the whole company, ladies though they be.

Well, after this follows a hushing up and wiping up among the juvenile population, and a series of remarks commences from the various shelves, of a very edifying and instructive tendency. One says that the woman did not seem to know where anything was; another says that she has waked them all up; a third adds that she has waked up all the children, too; and the elderly ladies make moral reflections on the importance of putting your things where you can find them — being always ready; which observations, being delivered in an exceedingly doleful and drowsy tone, form a sort of sub-bass to the lively chattering of the upper shelfites, who declare that they feel quite wide awake, — that they don't think they shall go to sleep again to-night, — and discourse over everything in creation, until you heartily wish you were enough related to them to give them a scolding.

At last, however, voice after voice drops off; you fall into a most refreshing slumber; it seems to you that you sleep about a quarter of an hour, when the chambermaid pulls you by the sleeve. "Will you please to get up, ma'am? We want to make the beds." You start and stare. Sure enough, the night is gone. So much for sleeping on board canal boats.

Let us not enumerate the manifold perplexities of the

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morning toilet in a place where every lady realizes most forcibly the condition of the old woman who lived under a broom: "All she wanted was elbow room." Let us not tell how one glass is made to answer for thirty fair faces, one ewer and vase for thirty lavations; and — tell it not in Gath! — one towel for a company! Let us not intimate how ladies' shoes have, in a night, clandestinely slid into the gentlemen's cabin, and gentlemen's boots elbowed, or rather, *toed* their way among ladies' gear, nor recite the exclamations after runaway property that are heard. "I can't find nothin' of Johnny's shoe!" "Here's a shoe in the water pitcher — is this it?" "My side-combs are gone!" exclaims a nymph with disheveled curls. "Massy! do look at my bonnet!" exclaims an old lady, elevating an article crushed into as many angles as there are pieces in a mince pie. "I never did sleep so much together in my life," echoes a poor little French lady, whom despair has driven into talking English.

But our shortening paper warns us not to prolong our catalogue of distresses beyond reasonable bounds, and therefore we will close with advising all our friends, who intend to try this way of traveling for pleasure, to take a good stock both of patience and clean towels with them, for we think that they will find abundant need for both.

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FEELING

THERE is one way of studying human nature, which surveys mankind only as a set of instruments for the accomplishment of personal plans. There is another, which regards them simply as a gallery of pictures, to be admired or laughed at as the caricature or the beau ideal predominates. A third way regards them as human beings, having hearts that can suffer and enjoy, that can be improved or be ruined; as those who are linked to us by mysterious reciprocal influences, by the common dangers of a present existence, and the uncertainties of a future one; as presenting, wherever we meet them, claims on our sympathy and assistance.

Those who adopt the last method are interested in human beings, not so much by present attractions as by their capabilities as intelligent, immortal beings; by a high belief of what every mind may attain in an immortal existence; by anxieties for its temptations and dangers, and often by the perception of errors and faults which threaten its ruin. The first two modes are adopted by the great mass of society, the last is the office of those few scattered stars in the sky of life, who look down on its dark selfishness to remind us that there is a world of light and love.

To this class did He belong, whose rising and setting on earth were for "the healing of the nations;" and to this class has belonged many a pure and devoted spirit, like him shining to cheer, like him fading away into the heavens. To this class many a one wishes to belong, who has an eye to distinguish the divinity of virtue, without the resolution to attain it; who, while they sweep along with the selfish

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current of society, still regret that society is not different — that they themselves are not different. If this train of thought has no very particular application to what follows, it was nevertheless suggested by it, and of its relevancy others must judge.

Look into this schoolroom. It is a warm, sleepy afternoon in July; there is scarcely air enough to stir the leaves of the tall buttonwood-tree before the door, or to lift the loose leaves of the copy-book in the window; the sun has been diligently shining into those curtainless west windows ever since three o'clock, upon those blotted and mangled desks, and those decrepit and tottering benches, and that great armchair, the high place of authority. You can faintly hear, about the door, the "craw, craw," of some neighboring chickens, which have stepped around to consider the dinner baskets, and pick up the crumbs of the noon's repast. For a marvel, the busy school is still, because, in truth, it is too warm to stir. You will find nothing to disturb your meditation on character, for you cannot hear the beat of those little hearts, nor the bustle of all those busy thoughts.

Now look around. Who of these is the most interesting? Is it that tall, slender, hazel-eyed boy, with a glance like a falcon, whose elbows rest on his book as he gazes out on the great buttonwood-tree, and is calculating how he shall fix his squirrel-trap when school is out? Or is it that curly-headed little rogue, who is shaking with repressed laughter at seeing a chicken roll over in a dinner basket? Or is it that arch boy with black eyelashes, and deep, mischievous dimple in his cheeks, who is slyly fixing a fish-hook to the skirts of the master's coat, yet looking as abstracted as Archimedes whenever the good man turns his head that way? No; these are intelligent, bright, beautiful, but it is not these. Perhaps, then, it is that sleepy little girl, with golden curls, and a mouth like a half-blown

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rosebud. See, the small brass thimble has fallen to the floor, her patchwork drops from her lap, her blue eyes close like two sleepy violets, her little head is nodding, and she sinks on her sister's shoulder: surely it is she. No, it is not. But look in that corner. Do you see that boy with such a gloomy countenance — so vacant, yet so ill-natured? He is doing nothing, and he very seldom does anything. He is surly and gloomy in his looks and actions. He never showed any more aptitude for saying or doing a pretty thing than his straight white hair does for curling. He is regularly blamed and punished every day, and the more he is blamed and punished the worse he grows. None of the boys and girls in school will play with him; or, if they do, they will be sorry for it. And every day the master assures him that "he does not know what to do with him," and that he "makes him more trouble than any boy in school," with similar judicious information, that has a striking tendency to promote improvement. That is the boy to whom I apply the title of "the most interesting one."

He is interesting because he is not pleasing; because he has bad habits; because he does wrong; because, under present influences, he is always likely to do wrong. He is interesting because he has become what he is now by means of the very temperament which often makes the noblest virtue. It is feeling, acuteness of feeling, which has given that countenance its expression, that character its moroseness.

He has no father, and that long-suffering friend, his mother, is gone too. Yet he has relations, and kind ones too; and, in the compassionate language of worldly charity, it may be said of him, "He would have nothing of which to complain, if he would only behave himself."

His little sister is always bright, always pleasant and cheerful; and his friends say, "Why should not he be so too? He is in exactly the same circumstances." No, he

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is not. In one circumstance they differ. He has a mind to feel and remember everything that can pain; she can feel and remember but little. If you blame him, he is exasperated, gloomy, and cannot forget it. If you blame her, she can say she has done wrong in a moment, and all is forgotten. Her mind can no more be wounded than the little brook where she loves to play. The bright waters close again, and smile and prattle as merry as before. Which is the most desirable temperament? It would be hard to say. The power of feeling is necessary for all that is noble in man, and yet it involves the greatest risks. They who catch at happiness on the bright surface of things secure a portion, such as it is, with more certainty; those who dive for it in the waters of deeper feeling, if they succeed, will bring up pearls and diamonds, but if they sink they are lost forever!

But now comes Saturday, and school is just out. Can any one of my readers remember the rapturous prospect of a long, bright Saturday afternoon? "Where are you going?" "Will you come and see me?" "We are going a-fishing!" "Let us go a-strawberrying!" may be heard rising from the happy group. But no one comes near the ill-humored James, and the little party going to visit his sister "wish James was out of the way." He sees every motion, hears every whisper, knows, suspects, feels it all, and turns to go home more sullen and ill-tempered than common. The world looks dark — nobody loves him — and he is told that it is "all his own fault," and that makes the matter still worse. When the little party arrive, he is suspicious and irritable, and, of course, soon excommunicated. Then, as he stands in disconsolate anger, looking over the garden fence at the gay group making dandelion chains, and playing baby house under the trees, he wonders why he is not like other children. He wishes he were different, and yet he does not know what to do. He looks around, and

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everything is blooming and bright. His little bed of flowers is even brighter and sweeter than ever before, and a new rose is just opening on his rosebush. There goes pussy, too, racing and scampering, with little Ellen after her, in among the alleys and flowers; and the birds are singing in the trees; and the soft winds brush the blossoms of the sweet pea against his cheek; and yet, though all nature looks on him so kindly, he is wretched.

Let us now change the scene. Why is that crowded assembly so attentive — so silent? Who is speaking? It is our old friend, the little disconsolate schoolboy. But his eyes are flashing with intellect, his face fervent with emotion, his voice breathes like music, and every mind is enchained. Again, it is a splendid sunset, and yonder enthusiast meets it face to face, as a friend. He is silent — rapt — happy. He feels the poetry which God has written; he is touched by it, as God meant that the feeling spirit should be touched. Again, he is watching by the bed of sickness, and it is blessed to have such a watcher! anticipating every want; relieving, not in a cold, uninterested way, but with the quick perceptions, the tenderness, the gentleness of an angel. Follow him into the circle of friendship, and why is he so loved and trusted? Why can you so easily tell to him what you can say to no one else besides? Why is it that all around him feel that he can understand, appreciate, be touched by all that touches them? And when heaven uncloses its doors of light, when all its knowledge, its purity, its bliss, rises on the eye and passes into the soul, who then will be looked on as the one who might be envied — he who can, or he who cannot feel?

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THE SEAMSTRESS

"Few, save the poor, feel for the poor;
The rich know not how hard
It is to be of needful food
And needful rest debarred.

"Their paths are paths of plenteousness;
They sleep on silk and down;
They never think how wearily
The weary head lies down.

"They never by the window sit,
And see the gay pass by,
Yet take their weary work again,
And with a mournful eye."

L. E. L.

HOWEVER fine and elevated, in a sentimental point of view, may have been the poetry of this gifted writer, we think we have never seen anything from this source that ought to give a better opinion of her than the little ballad from which the above verses are taken.

They show that the accomplished authoress possessed, not merely a knowledge of the dreamy ideal wants of human beings, but the more pressing and homely ones, which the fastidious and poetical are often the last to appreciate. The sufferings of poverty are not confined to those of the common, squalid, every-day-inured to hardships, and ready, with open hand, to receive charity, let it come to them as it will. There is another class on whom it presses with still heavier power — the generous, the decent, the self-respecting, who have struggled with their lot in silence, "bearing all things, hoping all things" and willing to endure all things, rather than breathe a word of complaint, or to acknowledge, even

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to themselves, that their own efforts will not be sufficient for their own necessities.

Pause with me a while at the door of yonder room, whose small window overlooks a little court below. It is inhabited by a widow and her daughter, dependent entirely on the labors of the needle, and those other slight and precarious resources, which are all that remain to woman when left to struggle her way through the world alone. It contains all their small earthly store, and there is scarce an article of its little stock of furniture that has not been thought of, and toiled for, and its price calculated over and over again, before everything could be made right for its purchase. Every article is arranged with the utmost neatness and care; nor is the most costly furniture of a fashionable parlor more sedulously guarded from a scratch or a rub, than is that brightly varnished bureau, and that neat cherry tea-table and bedstead. The floor, too, boasted once a carpet; but old Time has been busy with it, picking a hole here, and making a thin place there; and though the old fellow has been followed up by the most indefatigable zeal in darning, the marks of his mischievous fingers are too plain to be mistaken. It is true, a kindly neighbor has given a bit of faded baize, which has been neatly clipped and bound, and spread down over an entirely unmanageable hole in front of the fireplace; and other places have been repaired with pieces of different colors; and yet, after all, it is evident that the poor carpet is not long for this world.

But the best face is put upon everything. The little cupboard in the corner, that contains a few china cups, and one or two antiquated silver spoons, relics of better days, is arranged with jealous neatness, and the white muslin window curtain, albeit the muslin be old, has been carefully whitened and starched, and smoothly ironed, and put up with exact precision; and on the bureau, covered by a snowy cloth, are arranged a few books and other memorials

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of former times, and a faded miniature, which, though it have little about it to interest a stranger, is more precious to the poor widow than everything besides. Mrs. Ames is seated in her rocking-chair, supported by a pillow, and busy cutting out work, while her daughter, a slender, sickly-looking girl, is sitting by the window, intent on some fine stitching. Mrs. Ames in former days was the wife of a respectable merchant, and the mother of an affectionate family. But evil fortune had followed her with a steadiness that seemed like the stern decree of some adverse fate rather than the ordinary dealings of a merciful Providence. First came a heavy run of losses in business; then long and expensive sickness in the family, and the death of children. Then there was the selling of the large house and elegant furniture, to retire to a humbler style of living; and finally, the sale of all the property, with the view of quitting the shores of a native land, and commencing life again in a new one. But scarcely had the exiled family found themselves in the port of a foreign land, when the father was suddenly smitten down by the hand of death, and his lonely grave made in a land of strangers. The widow, broken-hearted and discouraged, had still a wearisome journey before her ere she could reach any whom she could consider as her friends. With her two daughters, entirely unattended, and with her finances impoverished by detention and sickness, she performed the tedious journey.

Arrived at the place of her destination, she found herself not only without immediate resources, but considerably in debt to one who had advanced money for her traveling expenses. With silent endurance she met the necessities of her situation. Her daughters, delicately reared, and hitherto carefully educated, were placed out to service, and Mrs. Ames sought for employment as a nurse. The younger child fell sick, and the hard earnings of the mother were all exhausted in the care of her; and though she recovered

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in part, she was declared by her physician to be the victim of a disease which would never leave her till it terminated her life. As soon, however, as her daughter was so far restored as not to need her immediate care, Mrs. Ames resumed her laborious employment. Scarcely had she been able, in this way, to discharge the debts for her journey and to furnish the small room we have described, when the hand of disease was laid heavily on herself. Too resolute and persevering to give way to the first attacks of pain and weakness, she still continued her fatiguing employment till her system was entirely prostrated. Thus all possibility of pursuing her business was cut off, and nothing remained but what could be accomplished by her own and her daughter's dexterity at the needle. It is at this time we ask you to look in upon the mother and daughter.

Mrs. Ames is sitting up, the first time for a week, and even to-day she is scarcely fit to do so; but she remembers that the month is coming round, and her rent will soon be due; and in her feebleness she will stretch every nerve to meet her engagements with punctilious exactness. Wearied at length with cutting out, and measuring, and drawing threads, she leans back in her chair, and her eye rests on the pale face of her daughter, who has been sitting for two hours intent on her stitching.

"Ellen, my child, your head aches; don't work so steadily."

"Oh, no, it don't ache much," said she, too conscious of looking very much tired. Poor girl! had she remained in the situation in which she was born, she would now have been skipping about, and enjoying life as other young girls of fifteen do; but now there is no choice of employments for her — no youthful companions — no visiting — no pleasant walks in the fresh air. Evening and morning, it is all the same; headache or sideache, it is all one. She must hold on the same unvarying task — a wearisome

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thing for a girl of fifteen. But see! the door opens, and Mrs. Ames's face brightens as her other daughter enters. Mary has become a domestic in a neighboring family, where her faithfulness and kindness of heart have caused her to be regarded more as a daughter and a sister than as a servant. "Here, mother, is your rent money," she exclaimed; "so do put up your work and rest a while. I can get enough to pay it next time before the month comes around again."

"Dear child, I do wish you would ever think to get anything for yourself," said Mrs. Ames. "I cannot consent to use up all your earnings, as I have done lately, and all Ellen's too; you must have a new dress this spring, and that bonnet of yours is not decent any longer."

"Oh, no, mother! I have made over my blue calico, and you would be surprised to see how well it looks; and my best frock, when it is washed and darned, will answer some time longer. And then Mrs. Grant has given me a ribbon, and when my bonnet is whitened and trimmed it will look very well. And so," she added, "I brought you some wine this afternoon; you know the doctor says you need wine."

"Dear child, I want to see you take some comfort of your money yourself."

"Well, I do take comfort of it, mother. It is more comfort to be able to help you than to wear all the finest dresses in the world."

Two months from this dialogue found our little family still more straitened and perplexed. Mrs. Ames had been confined all the time with sickness, and the greater part of Ellen's time and strength was occupied with attending to her. Very little sewing could the poor girl now do, in the broken intervals that remained to her; and the wages of Mary were not only used as fast as earned, but she antici-

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pated two months in advance. Mrs. Ames had been better for a day or two, and had been sitting up, exerting all her strength to finish a set of shirts which had been sent in to make. "The money for them will just pay our rent," sighed she; "and if we can do a little more this week" —

"Dear mother, you are so tired," said Ellen; "do lie down, and not worry any more till I come back."

Ellen went out, and passed on till she came to the door of an elegant house, whose damask and muslin window curtains indicated a fashionable residence. Mrs. Elmore was sitting in her splendidly furnished parlor, and around her lay various fancy articles which two young girls were busily unrolling. "What a lovely pink scarf!" said one, throwing it over her shoulders and skipping before a mirror; while the other exclaimed, "Do look at these pocket-handkerchiefs, mother! what elegant lace!"

"Well, girls," said Mrs. Elmore, "these handkerchiefs are a shameful piece of extravagance. I wonder you will insist on having such things."

"La, mamma, everybody has such now; Laura Seymour has half a dozen that cost more than these, and her father is no richer than ours."

"Well," said Mrs. Elmore, "rich or not rich, it seems to make very little odds; we do not seem to have half as much money to spare as we did when we lived in the little house in Spring Street. What with new furnishing the house, and getting everything you boys and girls say you must have, we are poorer, if anything, than we were then."

"Ma'am, here is Mrs. Ames's girl come with some sewing," said the servant.

"Show her in," said Mrs. Elmore.

Ellen entered timidly, and handed her bundle of work to Mrs. Elmore, who forthwith proceeded to a minute scrutiny of the articles, for she prided herself on being very particu-

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lar as to her sewing. But, though the work had been executed by feeble hands and aching eyes, even Mrs. Elmore could detect no fault in it.

"Well, it is very prettily done," said she. "What does your mother charge?"

Ellen handed a neatly folded bill which she had drawn for her mother. "I must say, I think your mother's prices are very high," said Mrs. Elmore, examining her nearly empty purse; "everything is getting so dear that one hardly knows how to live." Ellen looked at the fancy articles, and glanced around the room with an air of innocent astonishment. "Ah," said Mrs. Elmore, "I dare say it seems to you as if persons in our situation had no need of economy; but, for my part, I feel the need of it more and more every day." As she spoke she handed Ellen the three dollars, which, though it was not a quarter the price of one of the handkerchiefs, was all that she and her sick mother could claim in the world.

"There," said she; "tell your mother I like her work very much, but I do not think I can afford to employ her, if I can find any one to work cheaper."

Now, Mrs. Elmore was not a hard-hearted woman, and if Ellen had come as a beggar to solicit help for her sick mother, Mrs. Elmore would have fitted out a basket of provisions, and sent a bottle of wine, and a bundle of old clothes, and all the et cetera of such occasions; but the sight of a bill always aroused all the instinctive sharpness of her business-like education. She never had the dawning of an idea that it was her duty to pay anybody any more than she could possibly help; nay, she had an indistinct notion that it was her duty as an economist to make everybody take as little as possible. When she and her daughters lived in Spring Street, to which she had alluded, they used to spend the greater part of their time at home, and the family sewing was commonly done among themselves.

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But since they had moved into a large house, and set up a carriage, and addressed themselves to being genteel, the girls found that they had altogether too much to do to attend to their own sewing, much less to perform any for their father and brothers. And their mother found her hands abundantly full in overlooking her large house, in taking care of expensive furniture, and in superintending her increased train of servants. The sewing, therefore, was put out; and Mrs. Elmore felt it a duty to get it done the cheapest way she could. Nevertheless, Mrs. Elmore was too notable a lady, and her sons and daughters were altogether too fastidious as to the make and quality of their clothing, to admit the idea of its being done in any but the most complete and perfect manner.

Mrs. Elmore never accused herself of want of charity for the poor; but she had never considered that the best class of the poor are those who never ask charity. She did not consider that, by paying liberally those who were honestly and independently struggling for themselves, she was really doing a greater charity than by giving indiscriminately to a dozen applicants.

"Don't you think, mother, she says we charge too high for this work!" said Ellen, when she returned. "I am sure she did not know how much work we put in those shirts. She says she cannot give us any more work; she must look out for somebody that will do it cheaper. I do not see how it is that people who live in such houses, and have so many beautiful things, can feel that they cannot afford to pay for what costs us so much."

"Well, child, they are more apt to feel so than people who live plainer."

"Well, I am sure," said Ellen, "we cannot afford to spend so much time as we have over these shirts for less money."

"Never mind, my dear," said the mother soothingly,

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"here is a bundle of work that another lady has sent in, and if we get it done, we shall have enough for our rent, and something over to buy bread with."

It is needless to carry our readers over all the process of cutting, and fitting, and gathering, and stitching, necessary in making up six fine shirts. Suffice it to say that on Saturday evening all but one were finished, and Ellen proceeded to carry them home, promising to bring the remaining one on Tuesday morning. The lady examined the work, and gave Ellen the money; but on Tuesday, when the child came with the remaining work, she found her in great ill humor. Upon reëxamining the shirts, she had discovered that in some important respects they differed from directions she meant to have given, and supposed she had given; and, accordingly, she vented her displeasure on Ellen.

"Why did n't you make these shirts as I told you?" said she sharply.

"We did," said Ellen mildly; "mother measured by the pattern every part, and cut them herself."

"Your mother must be a fool, then, to make such a piece of work. I wish you would just take them back and alter them over;" and the lady proceeded with the directions, of which neither Ellen nor her mother till then had had any intimation. Unused to such language, the frightened Ellen took up her work and slowly walked homeward.

"Oh, dear, how my head does ache!" thought she to herself; "and poor mother! she said this morning she was afraid another of her sick turns was coming on, and we have all this work to pull out and do over."

"See here, mother," said she, with a disconsolate air, as she entered the room; "Mrs. Rudd says, take out all the bosoms, and rip off all the collars, and fix them quite another way. She says they are not like the pattern she sent; but she must have forgotten, for here it is. Look, mother; it is exactly as we made them."

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"Well, my child, carry back the pattern, and show her that it is so."

"Indeed, mother, she spoke so cross to me, and looked at me so, that I do not feel as if I could go back."

"I will go for you, then," said the kind Maria Stephens, who had been sitting with Mrs. Ames while Ellen was out. "I will take the pattern and shirts, and tell her the exact truth about it. I am not afraid of her." Maria Stephens was a tailoress, who rented a room on the same floor with Mrs. Ames, a cheerful, resolute, go-forward little body, and ready always to give a helping hand to a neighbor in trouble. So she took the pattern and shirts, and set out on her mission.

But poor Mrs. Ames, though she professed to take a right view of the matter, and was very earnest in showing Ellen why she ought not to distress herself about it, still felt a shivering sense of the hardness and unkindness of the world coming over her. The bitter tears would spring to her eyes, in spite of every effort to suppress them, as she sat mournfully gazing on the little faded miniature before mentioned. "When *he* was alive, I never knew what poverty or trouble was," was the thought that often passed through her mind. And how many a poor forlorn one has thought the same! Poor Mrs. Ames was confined to her bed for most of that week. The doctor gave absolute directions that she should do nothing, and keep entirely quiet — a direction very sensible indeed in the chamber of ease and competence, but hard to be observed in poverty and want. What pains the kind and dutiful Ellen took that week to make her mother feel easy! How often she replied to her anxious questions, that she was quite well, or that her head did not ache *much*! and by various other evasive expedients the child tried to persuade herself that she was speaking the truth. And during the times her mother slept, in the day or evening, she accomplished one or two

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pieces of plain work, with the price of which she expected to surprise her mother. It was towards evening when Ellen took her finished work to the elegant dwelling of Mrs. Page. "I shall get a dollar for this," said she; "enough to pay for mother's wine and medicine."

"This work is done very neatly," said Mrs. Page, "and here is some more I should like to have finished in the same way."

Ellen looked up wistfully, hoping Mrs. Page was going to pay her for the last work. But Mrs. Page was only searching a drawer for a pattern, which she put into Ellen's hands, and after explaining how she wanted her work done, dismissed her without saying a word about the expected dollar. Poor Ellen tried two or three times, as she was going out, to turn round and ask for it; but before she could decide what to say, she found herself in the street. Mrs. Page was an amiable, kind-hearted woman, but one who was so used to large sums of money that she did not realize how great an affair a single dollar might seem to other persons. For this reason, when Ellen had worked incessantly at the new work put into her hands, that she might get the money for all together, she again disappointed her in the payment.

"I 'll send the money round to-morrow," said she, when Ellen at last found courage to ask for it. But to-morrow came, and Ellen was forgotten; and it was not till after one or two applications more that the small sum was paid.

But these sketches are already long enough, and let us hasten to close them. Mrs. Ames found liberal friends, who could appreciate and honor her integrity of principle and loveliness of character, and by their assistance she was raised to see more prosperous days; and she, and the delicate Ellen, and warm-hearted Mary were enabled to have a home and fireside of their own, and to enjoy something like the return of their former prosperity. We have given these sketches, drawn

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from real life, because we think there is in general too little consideration on the part of those who give employment to those in situations like the widow here described. The giving of employment is a very important branch of charity, inasmuch as it assists that class of the poor who are the most deserving. It should be looked on in this light, and the arrangements of a family be so made that a suitable compensation can be given, and prompt and cheerful payment be made, without the dread of transgressing the rules of economy. It is better to teach our daughters to do without expensive ornaments or fashionable elegances; better even to deny ourselves the pleasure of large donations or direct subscriptions to public charities, rather than to curtail the small stipend of her whose "candle goeth not out by night," and who labors with her needle for herself and the helpless dear ones dependent on her exertions.

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OLD FATHER MORRIS

A SKETCH FROM NATURE

Of all the marvels that astonished my childhood, there is none I remember to this day with so much interest as the old man whose name forms my caption. When I knew him he was an aged clergyman, settled over an obscure village in New England. He had enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education, had a strong, original power of thought, an omnipotent imagination, and much general information; but so early and so deeply had the habits and associations of the plough, the farm, and country life wrought themselves into his mind, that his after acquirements could only mingle with them, forming an unexampled amalgam like unto nothing but itself. He was an ingrained New Englander, and whatever might have been the source of his information, it came out in Yankee form, with the strong provinciality of Yankee dialect. It is in vain to attempt to give a full picture of such a genuine unique; but some slight and imperfect dashes may help the imagination to a faint idea of what none can fully conceive but those who have seen and heard old Father Morris.

Suppose yourself one of half a dozen children, and you hear the cry, "Father Morris is coming!" You run to the window or door, and you see a tall, bulky old man, with a pair of saddlebags on one arm, hitching his old horse with a fumbling carefulness, and then deliberately stumping towards the house. You notice his tranquil, florid, full-moon face, enlightened by a pair of great round blue eyes, that roll with dreamy inattentiveness on all the objects around;

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and as he takes off his hat, you see the white curling wig that sets off his round head. He comes towards you, and as you stand staring, with all the children around, he deliberately puts his great hand on your head, and, with deep, rumbling voice, inquires, —

"How d' ye do, my darter? is your daddy at home?" "My darter" usually makes off as fast as possible, in an unconquerable giggle. Father Morris goes into the house, and we watch him at every turn, as, with the most liberal simplicity, he makes himself at home, takes off his wig, wipes down his great face with a checked pocket-handkerchief, helps himself hither and thither to whatever he wants, and asks for such things as he cannot lay his hands on, with all the comfortable easiness of childhood. I remember to this day how we used to peep through the crack of the door, or hold it half ajar and peer in, to watch his motions; and how mightily diverted we were with his deep, slow manner of speaking, his heavy, cumbrous walk, but, above all, with the wonderful faculty of "hemming" which he possessed. His deep, thundering, protracted "A-hem-em" was like nothing else that ever I heard; and when once, as he was in the midst of one of these performances, the parlor door suddenly happened to swing open, I heard one of my roguish brothers calling, in a suppressed tone, "Charles! Charles! Father Morris has hemmed the door open!" — and then followed the signs of a long and desperate titter, in which I sincerely sympathized.

But the morrow is Sunday. The old man rises in the pulpit. He is not now in his own humble little parish, preaching simply to the hoers of corn and planters of potatoes, but there sits Governor D., and there is Judge R., and Counselor P., and Judge G. In short, he is before a refined and literary audience. But Father Morris rises: he thinks nothing of this; he cares nothing; he knows nothing, as he himself would say, but "Jesus Christ, and him cru-

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cified." He takes a passage of Scripture to explain; perhaps it is the walk to Emmaus, and the conversation of Jesus with his disciples. Immediately the whole start out before you, living and picturesque: the road to Emmaus is a New England turnpike; you can see its milestones, its mullein stalks, its tollgates. Next the disciples rise, and you have before you all their anguish, and hesitation, and dismay talked out to you in the language of your own fireside. You smile; you are amused; yet you are touched, and the illusion grows every moment. You see the approaching stranger, and the mysterious conversation grows more and more interesting. Emmaus rises in the distance, in the likeness of a New England village, with a white meeting-house and spire. You follow the travelers; you enter the house with them; nor do you wake from your trance until, with streaming eyes, the preacher tells you that "they saw it was the Lord Jesus — and what a pity it was they could not have known it before!"

It was after a sermon on this very chapter of Scripture history that Governor Griswold, in passing out of the house, laid hold on the sleeve of his first acquaintance: "Pray tell me," said he, "who is this minister?"

"Why, it is old Father Morris."

"Well, he is an oddity — and a genius too, I declare!" he continued. "I have been wondering all the morning how I could have read the Bible to so little purpose as not to see all these particulars he has presented."

I once heard him narrate in this picturesque way the story of Lazarus. The great bustling city of Jerusalem first rises to view, and you are told with great simplicity, how the Lord Jesus "used to get tired of the noise;" and how he was "tired of preaching, again and again, to people who would not mind a word he said;" and how "when it came evening, he used to go out and see his friends in Bethany." Then he told about the house of Martha and Mary: "a

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little white house among the trees," he said; "you could just see it from Jerusalem." And there the Lord Jesus and his disciples used to go and sit in the evenings, with Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus. Then the narrator went on to tell how Lazarus died, describing, with tears and a choking voice, the distress they were in, and how they sent a message to the Lord Jesus and he did not come, and how they wondered and wondered; and thus on he went, winding up the interest by the graphic minutiæ of an eye-witness, till he woke you from the dream by his triumphant joy at the resurrection scene.

On another occasion, as he was sitting at a tea-table, unusually supplied with cakes and sweetmeats, he found an opportunity to make a practical allusion to the same family story. He said that Mary was quiet and humble, sitting at her Saviour's feet to hear his words; but Martha thought more of what was to be got for tea. Martha could not find time to listen to Christ. No; she was "'cumbered with much serving' — around the house, frying fritters and making gingerbread."

Among his own simple people, his style of Scripture-painting was listened to with breathless interest. But it was particularly in those rustic circles, called "conference meetings," that his whole warm soul unfolded, and the Bible in his hands became a gallery of New England paintings. He particularly loved the evangelists, following the footsteps of Jesus Christ, dwelling upon his words, repeating over and over again the stories of what he did, with all the fond veneration of an old and favored servant. Sometimes, too, he would give the narration an exceedingly practical turn, as one example will illustrate. He had noticed a falling off in his little circle that met for social prayer, and took occasion, the first time he collected a tolerable audience, to tell concerning "the conference meeting that the disciples attended" after the resurrection.

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"But Thomas was not with them." "Thomas not with them!" said the old man, in a sorrowful voice. "Why, what could keep Thomas away? Perhaps," said he, glancing at some of his backward auditors, "Thomas had got cold-hearted, and was afraid they would ask him to make the first prayer; or perhaps," said he, looking at some of the farmers, "Thomas was afraid the roads were bad; or perhaps," he added after a pause, "Thomas had got proud, and thought he could not come in his old clothes." Thus he went on, significantly summing up the common excuses of his people; and then with great simplicity and emotion he added, "But only think what Thomas lost, for in the middle of the meeting, the Lord Jesus came and stood among them! How sorry Thomas must have been!" This representation served to fill the vacant seats for some time to come.

At another time Father Morris gave the details of the anointing of David to be king. He told them how Samuel went to Bethlehem, to Jesse's house, and went in with a "How d' ye do, Jesse?" and how, when Jesse asked him to take a chair, he said he could not stay a minute; that the Lord had sent him to anoint one of his sons for a king; and how, when Jesse called in the tallest and handsomest, Samuel said "he would not do;" and how all the rest passed the same test; and at last how Samuel says, "Why, have not you any more sons, Jesse?" and Jesse says, "Why, yes, there is little David, down in the lot;" and how, as soon as ever Samuel saw David, "he slashed the oil right on to him;" and how Jesse said "he never was so beat in all his life."

Father Morris sometimes used his illustrative talent to very good purpose in the way of rebuke. He had on his farm a fine orchard of peaches, from which some of the ten and twelve-year-old gentlemen helped themselves more liberally than even the old man's kindness thought expedient.

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Accordingly, he took occasion to introduce into his sermon one Sunday, in his little parish, an account of a journey he took; and how he was "very warm and very dry;" and how he saw a fine orchard of peaches that made his mouth water to look at them. "So," says he, "I came up to the fence and looked all around, for I would not have touched one of them without leave for all the world. At last I spied a man, and says I, 'Mister, won't you give me some of your peaches?' So the man came and gave me nigh about a hatful. And while I stood there eating, I said, 'Mister, how do you manage to keep your peaches?' 'Keep them!' said he, and he stared at me; 'what do you mean?' 'Yes, sir,' said I; 'don't the boys steal them?' 'Boys steal them!' said he. 'No, indeed!' 'Why, sir,' said I, 'I have a whole lot full of peaches, and I cannot get half of them'"—here the old man's voice grew tremulous—"'because the boys in my parish steal them so.' 'Why, sir,' said he, 'don't their parents teach them not to steal?' And I grew all over in a cold sweat, and I told him 'I was afeard they did n't.' 'Why, how you talk!' says the man; 'do tell me where you live?' Then," said Father Morris, the tears running over, "I was obliged to tell him I lived in the town of G." After this Father Morris kept his peaches.

Our old friend was not less original in the logical than in the illustrative portions of his discourses. His logic was of that familiar, colloquial kind which shakes hands with common sense like an old friend. Sometimes, too, his great mind and great heart would be poured out on the vast themes of religion in language which, though homely, produced all the effects of the sublime. He once preached a discourse on the text, "the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity;" and from the beginning to the end it was a train of lofty and solemn thought. With his usual simple earnestness, and his great, rolling voice, he told about

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"the Great God, — the Great Jehovah, — and how the people in this world were flustering and worrying, and afraid they should not get time to do this, and that, and t' other. But," he added with full-hearted satisfaction, "the Lord is never in a hurry; he has it all to do, but he has time enough, for he inhabiteth eternity." And the grand idea of infinite leisure and almighty resources was carried through the sermon with equal strength and simplicity.

Although the old man never seemed to be sensible of anything tending to the ludicrous in his own mode of expressing himself, yet he had considerable relish for humor, and some shrewdness of repartee. One time, as he was walking through a neighboring parish famous for its profanity, he was stopped by a whole flock of the youthful reprobates of the place: —

"Father Morris, Father Morris! the devil's dead!"

"Is he?" said the old man, benignly laying his hand on the head of the nearest urchin; "you poor fatherless children!"

But the sayings and doings of this good old man, as reported in the legends of the neighborhood, are more than can be gathered or reported. He lived far beyond the common age of man, and continued, when age had impaired his powers, to tell over and over again the same Bible stories that he had told so often before. I recollect hearing of the joy that almost broke the old man's heart when, after many years' diligent watching and nurture of the good seed in his parish, it began to spring into vegetation, sudden and beautiful as that which answers the patient watching of the husbandman. Many a hard, worldly-hearted man — many a sleepy, inattentive hearer, many a listless, idle young person — began to give ear to words that had long fallen unheeded. A neighboring minister, who had been sent for to see and rejoice in these results, describes the scene when, on entering the little church, he found an anxious, crowded

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auditory assembled around their venerable teacher, waiting for direction and instruction. The old man was sitting in his pulpit, almost choking with fullness of emotion as he gazed around. "Father," said the youthful minister, "I suppose you are ready to say with old Simeon, 'Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen thy salvation.'" "*Sartin, sartin,*" said the old man, while the tears streamed down his cheeks, and his whole frame shook with emotion.

It was not many years after that this simple and loving servant of Christ was gathered in peace unto Him whom he loved. His name is fast passing from remembrance, and in a few years his memory, like his humble grave, will be entirely grown over and forgotten among men, though it will be had in everlasting remembrance by Him who "forgetteth not his servants," and in whose sight the death of his saints is precious.

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THE CORAL RING

"THERE is no time of life in which young girls are so thoroughly selfish as from fifteen to twenty," said Edward Ashton deliberately, as he laid down a book he had been reading, and leaned over the centre table.

"You insulting fellow!" replied a tall, brilliant-looking creature, who was lounging on an ottoman hard by, over one of Dickens's last works.

"Truth, coz, for all that," said the gentleman, with the air of one who means to provoke a discussion.

"Now, Edward, this is just one of your wholesale declarations, for nothing only to get me into a dispute with you, you know," replied the lady. "On your conscience, now (if you have one), is it not so?"

"My conscience feels quite easy, cousin, in subscribing to that sentiment as my confession of faith," replied the gentleman, with provoking *sang froid*.

"Pshaw! it 's one of your fusty old bachelor notions. See what comes, now, of your living to your time of life without a wife, — disrespect for the sex, and all that. Really, cousin, your symptoms are getting alarming."

"Nay, now, Cousin Florence," said Edward, "you are a girl of moderately good sense, with all your nonsense. Now don't you (I know you do) think just so, too?"

"Think just so, too! — do you hear the creature?" replied Florence. "No, sir; you can speak for yourself in this matter, but I beg leave to enter my protest when you speak for me, too."

"Well, now, where is there, coz, among all our circle, a

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young girl that has any sort of purpose or object in life, to speak of, except to make herself as interesting and agreeable as possible? to be admired, and to pass her time in as amusing a way as she can? Where will you find one between fifteen and twenty that has any serious regard for the improvement and best welfare of those with whom she is connected at all, or that modifies her conduct in the least with reference to it? Now, cousin, in very serious earnest, you have about as much real character, as much earnestness and depth of feeling, and as much good sense, when one can get at it, as any young lady of them all; and yet, on your conscience, can you say that you live with any sort of reference to anybody's good, or to anything but your own amusement and gratification?"

"What a shocking adjuration!" replied the lady, "prefaced, too, by a three-story compliment. Well, being so adjured, I must think to the best of my ability. And now, seriously and soberly, I don't see as I am selfish. I do all that I have any occasion to do for anybody. You know that we have servants to do everything that is necessary about the house, so that there is no occasion for my making any display of housewifery excellence. And I wait on mamma if she has a headache, and hand papa his slippers and newspaper, and find Uncle John's spectacles for him twenty times a day (no small matter that), and then" —

"But, after all, what is the object and purpose of your life?"

"Why, I haven't any. I don't see how I can have any, — that is, as I am made. Now, you know, I've none of the fussing, baby-tending, herb-tea-making recommendations of Aunt Sally, and divers others of the class commonly called *useful*. Indeed, to tell the truth, I think useful persons are commonly rather fussy and stupid. They are just like the boneset, and hoarhound, and catnip, — very necessary to be raised in a garden, but not in the least ornamental."

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"And you charming young ladies, who philosophize in kid slippers and French dresses, are the tulips and roses, — very charming, and delightful, and sweet, but fit for nothing on earth but parlor ornaments."

"Well, parlor ornaments are good in their way," said the young lady, coloring, and looking a little vexed.

"So you give up the point, then," said the gentleman, "that you girls are good for — just to amuse yourselves, amuse others, look pretty, and be agreeable?"

"Well, and if we behave well to our parents, and are amiable in the family — I don't know; — and yet," said Florence, sighing, "I have often had a sort of vague idea of something higher that we might become; yet, really, what more than this is expected of us? what else can we do?"

"I used to read in old-fashioned novels about ladies visiting the sick and the poor," replied Edward. "You remember 'Cœlebs in Search of a Wife'?"

"Yes, truly; that is to say, I remember the story part of it, and the love scenes; but as for all those everlasting conversations of Dr. Barlow, Mr. Stanley, and nobody knows who else, I skipped those, of course. But really, this visiting and tending the poor, and all that, seems very well in a story, where the lady goes into a picturesque cottage, half overgrown with honeysuckle, and finds an emaciated but still beautiful woman propped up by pillows. But come to the downright matter of fact of poking about in all these vile, dirty alleys, and entering little dark rooms, amid troops of grinning children, and smelling codfish and onions, and nobody knows what, — dear me, my benevolence always evaporates before I get through. I'd rather pay anybody five dollars a day to do it for me than do it myself. The fact is, that I have neither fancy nor nerves for this kind of thing."

"Well, granting, then, that you can do nothing for your fellow-creatures unless you are to do it in the most genteel,

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comfortable, and picturesque manner possible, is there not a great field for a woman like you, Florence, in your influence over your associates? With your talents for conversation, your tact and self-possession, and ladylike gift of saying anything you choose, are you not responsible, in some wise, for the influence you exert over those by whom you are surrounded?"

"I never thought of that," replied Florence.

"Now, you remember the remarks that Mr. Fortesque made the other evening on the religious services at church?"

"Yes, I do; and I thought then he was too bad."

"And I do not suppose there was one of you ladies in the room that did not think so, too; but yet the matter was all passed over with smiles, and with not a single insinuation that he had said anything unpleasing or disagreeable."

"Well, what could we do? One does not want to be rude, you know."

"Do! Could you not, Florence, — you who have always taken the lead in society, and who have been noted for always being able to say and do what you please, — could you not have shown him that those remarks were unpleasing to you, as decidedly as you certainly would have done if they had related to the character of your father or brother? To my mind, a woman of true moral feeling should consider herself as much insulted when her religion is treated with contempt as if the contempt were shown to herself. Do you not know the power which is given to you women to awe and restrain us in your presence, and to guard the sacredness of things which you treat as holy? Believe me, Florence, that Fortesque, infidel as he is, would reverence a woman with whom he dared not trifle on sacred subjects."

Florence rose from her seat with a heightened color, her dark eyes brightening through tears.

"I am sure what you say is just, cousin, and yet I have never thought of it before. I will — I am determined to

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begin, after this, to live with some better purpose than I have done."

"And let me tell you, Florence, in starting a new course, as in learning to walk, taking the first step is everything. Now, I have a first step to propose to you."

"Well, cousin" —

"Well, you know, I suppose, that among your train of adorers you number Colonel Elliot?"

Florence smiled.

"And perhaps you do not know, what is certainly true, that, among the most discerning and cool part of his friends, Elliot is considered as a lost man."

"Good heavens! Edward, what do you mean?"

"Simply this: that, with all his brilliant talents, his amiable and generous feelings, and his success in society, Elliot has not self-control enough to prevent his becoming confirmed in intemperate habits."

"I never dreamed of this," replied Florence. "I knew that he was spirited and free, fond of society, and excitable; but never suspected anything beyond."

"Elliot has tact enough never to appear in ladies' society when he is not in a fit state for it," replied Edward; "but yet it is so."

"But is he really so bad?"

"He stands just on the verge, Florence; just where a word fitly spoken might turn him. He is a noble creature, full of all sorts of fine impulses and feelings; the only son of a mother who dotes on him, the idolized brother of sisters who love him as you love your brother, Florence; and he stands where a word, a look, — so they be of the right kind, — might save him."

"And why, then, do you not speak to him?" said Florence.

"Because I am not the best person, Florence. There is another who can do it better; one whom he admires, who

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stands in a position which would forbid his feeling angry; a person, cousin, whom I have heard in gayer moments say that she knew how to say anything she pleased without offending anybody."

"Oh, Edward!" said Florence coloring; "do not bring up my foolish speeches against me, and do not speak as if I ought to interfere in this matter, for indeed I cannot do it. I never could in the world, I am certain I could not."

"And so," said Edward, "you, whom I have heard say so many things which no one else could say, or dared to say, — you, who have gone on with your laughing assurance in your own powers of pleasing, — shrink from trying that power when a noble and generous heart might be saved by it. You have been willing to venture a great deal for the sake of amusing yourself and winning admiration, but you dare not say a word for any high or noble purpose. Do you not see how you confirm what I said of the selfishness of you women?"

"But you must remember, Edward, this is a matter of great delicacy."

"That word 'delicacy' is a charming cover-all in all these cases, Florence. Now, here is a fine, noble-spirited young man, away from his mother and sisters, away from any family friend who might care for him, tempted, betrayed, almost to ruin, and a few words from you, said as a woman knows how to say them, might be his salvation. But you will coldly look on and see him go to destruction, because you have too much delicacy to make the effort, — like the man that would not help his neighbor out of the water because he had never had the honor of an introduction."

"But, Edward, consider how peculiarly fastidious Elliot is, — how jealous of any attempt to restrain and guide him."

"And just for that reason it is that *men* of his acquaintance cannot do anything with him. But what are you women made with so much tact and power of charming for, if it is

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not to do these very things that we cannot do? It is a delicate matter — true; and has not Heaven given to you a fine touch and a fine eye for just such delicate matters? Have you not seen, a thousand times, that what might be resented as an impertinent interference on the part of a man, comes to us as a flattering expression of interest from the lips of a woman?"

"Well, but, cousin, what would you have me do? How would you have me do it?" said Florence earnestly.

"You know that Fashion, which makes so many wrong turns and so many absurd ones, has at last made one good one, and it is now a fashionable thing to sign the temperance pledge. Elliot himself would be glad to do it, but he foolishly committed himself against it in the outset, and now feels bound to stand to his opinion. He has, too, been rather rudely assailed by some of the apostles of the new state of things, who did not understand the peculiar points of his character; in short, I am afraid that he will feel bound to go to destruction for the sake of supporting his own opinion. Now, if I should undertake with him, he might shoot me; but I hardly think there is anything of the sort to be apprehended in your case. Just try your enchantments: you have bewitched wise men into doing foolish things before now; try, now, if you can't bewitch a foolish man into doing a wise thing."

Florence smiled archly, but instantly grew more thoughtful.

"Well, cousin," she said, "I will try. Though you are liberal in your ascriptions of power, yet I can put the matter to the test of experiment."

Florence Elmore was, at the time we speak of, in her twentieth year. Born of one of the wealthiest families in ——, highly educated and accomplished, idolized by her parents and brothers, she had entered the world as one born

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to command. With much native nobleness and magnanimity of character, with warm and impulsive feelings, and a capability of everything high or great, she had hitherto lived solely for her own amusement, and looked on the whole brilliant circle by which she was surrounded, with all its various actors, as something got up for her special diversion. The idea of influencing any one, for better or worse, by anything she ever said or did, had never occurred to her. The crowd of admirers of the other sex who, as a matter of course, were always about her, she regarded as so many sources of diversion; but the idea of feeling any sympathy with them as human beings, or of making use of her power over them for their improvement, was one that had never entered her head.

Edward Ashton was an old bachelor cousin of Florence's, who, having earned the title of oddity in general society, availed himself of it to exercise a turn for telling the truth to the various young ladies of his acquaintance, especially to his fair cousin Florence. We remark, by the bye, that these privileged truth-tellers are quite a necessary of life to young ladies in the full tide of society, and we really think it would be worth while for every dozen of them to unite to keep a person of this kind on a salary for the benefit of the whole. However, that is nothing to our present purpose; we must return to our fair heroine, whom we left, at the close of the last conversation, standing in deep revery by the window.

"It's more than half true," she said to herself, — "more than half. Here am I, twenty years old, and never have thought of anything, never done anything, except to amuse and gratify myself; no purpose, no object; nothing high, nothing dignified, nothing worth living for! Only a parlor ornament — heigh-ho! Well, I really do believe I could do something with this Elliot; and yet how dare I try?"

Now, my good readers, if you are anticipating a love story,

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we must hasten to put in our disclaimer; you are quite mistaken in the case. Our fair, brilliant heroine was, at this time of speaking, as heart-whole as the diamond on her bosom, which reflected the light in too many sparkling rays ever to absorb it. She had, to be sure, half in earnest, half in jest, maintained a bantering, platonic sort of friendship with George Elliot. She had danced, ridden, sung, and sketched with him, but so had she with twenty other young men; and as to coming to anything tender with such a quick, brilliant, restless creature, Elliot would as soon have undertaken to sentimentalize over a glass of soda-water. No; there was decidedly no love in the case.

"What a curious ring that is!" said Elliot to her, a day or two after, as they were reading together.

"It is a knight's ring," said she playfully, as she drew it off and pointed to a coral cross set in the gold, "a ring of the red-cross knights. Come, now, I've a great mind to bind you to my service with it."

"Do, lady fair," said Elliot, stretching out his hand for the ring.

"Know, then," said she, "if you take this pledge, that you must obey whatever commands I lay upon you in its name."

"I swear!" said Elliot, in the mock heroic, and placed the ring on his finger.

An evening or two after, Elliot attended Florence to a party at Mrs. B.'s. Everything was gay and brilliant, and there was no lack either of wit or wine. Elliot was standing in a little alcove, spread with refreshments, with a glass of wine in his hand. "I forbid it; the cup is poisoned!" said a voice in his ear. He turned quickly, and Florence was at his side. Every one was busy, with laughing and talking, around, and nobody saw the sudden start and flush that these words produced as Elliot looked earnestly in the lady's face. She smiled, and pointed play-

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fully to the ring; but, after all, there was in her face an expression of agitation and interest which she could not repress, and Elliot felt, however playful the manner, that she was in earnest; and, as she glided away in the crowd, he stood with his arms folded, and his eyes fixed on the spot where she disappeared.

"Is it possible that I am suspected, — that there are things said of me as if I were in danger?" were the first thoughts that flashed through his mind. How strange that a man may appear doomed, given up, and lost, to the eye of every looker-on, before he begins to suspect himself! This was the first time that any defined apprehension of loss of character had occurred to Elliot, and he was startled as if from a dream.

"What the deuce is the matter with you, Elliot? You look as solemn as a hearse!" said a young man near by.

"Has Miss Elmore cut you?" said another.

"Come, man, have a glass," said a third.

"Let him alone, — he 's bewitched," said a fourth. "I saw the spell laid on him. None of us can say but our turn may come next."

An hour later, that evening, Florence was talking with her usual spirit to a group who were collected around her, when, suddenly looking up, she saw Elliot, standing in an abstracted manner at one of the windows that looked out into the balcony.

"He is offended, I dare say," she thought; "but what do I care? For once in my life I have tried to do a right thing, — a good thing. I have risked giving offense for less than this, many a time." Still, Florence could not but feel tremulous, when, a few moments after, Elliot approached her and offered his arm for a promenade. They walked up and down the room, she talking volubly, and he answering yes and no, till at length, as if by accident, he drew her into the balcony which overhung the garden. The moon

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was shining brightly, and everything without, in its placid quietness, contrasted strangely with the busy, hurrying scene within.

"Miss Elmore," said Elliot abruptly, "may I ask you, sincerely, had you any design in a remark you made to me in the early part of the evening?"

Florence paused, and, though habitually the most practiced and self-possessed of women, the color actually receded from her cheek as she answered, —

"Yes, Mr. Elliot; I must confess that I had."

"And is it possible, then, that you have heard anything?"

"I have heard, Mr. Elliot, that which makes me tremble for you, and for those whose life, I know, is bound up in you; and, tell me, were it well or friendly in me to know that such things were said, that such danger existed, and not to warn you of it?"

Elliot stood for a few moments in silence.

"Have I offended? Have I taken too great a liberty?" said Florence gently.

Hitherto Elliot had only seen in Florence the self-possessed, assured, light-hearted woman of fashion; but there was a reality and depth of feeling in the few words she had spoken to him, in this interview, that opened to him entirely a new view in her character.

"No, Miss Elmore," replied he earnestly, after some pause; "I may be pained, offended I cannot be. To tell the truth, I have been thoughtless, excited, dazzled; my spirits, naturally buoyant, have carried me, often, too far; and lately I have painfully suspected my own powers of resistance. I have really felt that I needed help, but have been too proud to confess, even to myself, that I needed it. You, Miss Elmore, have done what, perhaps, no one else could have done. I am overwhelmed with gratitude, and I shall bless you for it to the latest day of my life. I am

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ready to pledge myself to anything you may ask on this subject."

"Then," said Florence, "do not shrink from doing what is safe, and necessary, and right for you to do, because you have once said you would not do it. You understand me?"

"Precisely," replied Elliot, "and you shall be obeyed."

It was not more than a week before the news was circulated that even George Elliot had signed the pledge of temperance. There was much wondering at this sudden turn among those who had known his utter repugnance to any measure of the kind, and the extent to which he had yielded to temptation; but few knew how fine and delicate had been the touch to which his pride had yielded.

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ART AND NATURE

"Now, girls," said Mrs. Ellis Grey to her daughters, "here is a letter from George Somers, and he is to be down here next week; so I give you fair warning."

"Warning?" said Fanny Grey, looking up from her embroidery; "what do you mean by that, mamma?"

"Now that's just you, Fanny," said the elder sister, laughing. "You dear little simplicity, you can never understand anything unless it is stated as definitely as the multiplication table."

"But we need no warning in the case of Cousin George, I'm sure," said Fanny.

"Cousin George, to be sure! Do you hear the little innocent?" said Isabella, the second sister. "I suppose, Fanny, you never heard that he had been visiting all the courts of Europe, seeing all the fine women, stone, picture, and real, that are to be found. Such an amateur and connoisseur!"

"Besides having received a fortune of a million or so," said Emma. "I dare say now, Fanny, you thought he was coming home to make dandelion chains, and play with button balls, as he used to do when he was a little boy."

"Fanny will never take the world as it is," said Mrs. Grey. "I do believe she will be a child as long as she lives." Mrs. Grey said this as if she were sighing over some radical defect in the mind of her daughter, and the delicate cheek of Fanny showed a tint somewhat deeper as she spoke, and she went on with her embroidery in silence.

Mrs. Grey had been left, by the death of her husband,

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sole guardian of the three girls whose names have appeared on the page. She was an active, busy, ambitious woman, one of the sort for whom nothing is ever finished enough, or perfect enough, without a few touches, and dashes, and emendations; and, as such people always make a mighty affair of education, Mrs. Grey had made it a life's enterprise to order, adjust, and settle the character of her daughters; and when we use the word "character," as Mrs. Grey understood it, we mean it to include both face, figure, dress, accomplishments, as well as those more unessential items, mind and heart.

Mrs. Grey had determined that her daughters should be something altogether out of the common way; and accordingly she had conducted the training of the two eldest with such zeal and effect that every trace of an original character was thoroughly educated out of them. All their opinions, feelings, words, and actions, instead of gushing naturally from their hearts, were, according to the most approved authority, diligently compared and revised. Emma, the eldest, was an imposing, showy girl, of some considerable talent, and she had been assiduously trained to make a sensation as a woman of ability and intellect. Her mind had been filled with information on all sorts of subjects, much faster than she had power to digest or employ it; and, the standard which her ambitious mother had set for her being rather above the range of her abilities, there was a constant sensation of effort in her keeping up to it. In hearing her talk you were constantly reminded, "I am a woman of intellect, — I am entirely above the ordinary level of woman;" and on all subjects she was so anxiously and laboriously, well and circumstantially, informed, that it was enough to make one's head ache to hear her talk.

Isabella, the second daughter, was, *par excellence*, a beauty, — a tall, sparkling, Cleopatra-looking girl, whose rich color, dazzling eyes, and superb figure might have bid

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defiance to art to furnish an extra charm; nevertheless each grace had been as indefatigably drilled and manœuvred as the members of an artillery company. Eyes, lips, eyelashes, all had their lesson; and every motion of her sculptured limbs, every intonation of her silvery voice, had been studied, considered, and corrected, till even her fastidious mother could discern nothing that was wanting. Then were added all the graces of belles-lettres, — all the approved rules of being delighted with music, painting, and poetry, — and last of all came the tour of the continent; traveling being generally considered a sort of pumice-stone for rubbing down the varnish and giving the very last touch to character.

During the time that all this was going on, Miss Fanny, whom we now declare our heroine, had been growing up in the quietude of her mother's country seat, and growing, as girls are apt to, much faster than her mother imagined. She was a fair, slender girl, with a purity and simplicity of appearance which, if it be not in itself beauty, had all the best effect of beauty in interesting and engaging the heart. She looked not so much beautiful as lovable. Her character was in precise correspondence with her appearance: its first and chief element was feeling; and to this add fancy, fervor, taste, enthusiasm almost up to the point of genius, and just common sense enough to keep them all in order, and you will have a very good idea of the mind of Fanny Grey.

Delightfully passed the days with Fanny during the absence of her mother, while, without thought of rule or compass, she sang her own songs, painted flowers, and sketched landscapes from nature, visited sociably all over the village, where she was a great favorite, ran about through the fields, over fences, or in the woods, with her little cottage bonnet, and, above all, built her own little castles in the air without anybody to help pull them down, which we think about the happiest circumstance in her situation.

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But affairs wore a very different aspect when Mrs. Grey with her daughters returned from Europe, as full of foreign tastes and notions as people of an artificial character generally do return. Poor Fanny was deluged with a torrent of new ideas; she heard of styles of appearance and styles of beauty, styles of manner and styles of conversation, this, that, and the other air, a general effect and a particular effect, and of four hundred and fifty ways of producing an impression, — in short, it seemed to her that people ought to be of wonderful consequence to have so many things to think and to say about the how and why of every word and action. Mrs. Grey, who had no manner of doubt of her own ability to make over a character, undertook the point with Fanny as systematically as one would undertake to make over an old dress. Poor Fanny, who had an unconquerable aversion to trying on dresses or settling points in millinery, went through with most exemplary meekness an entire transformation as to all externals; but when Mrs. Grey set herself at work upon her mind, and tastes, and opinions, the matter became somewhat more serious; for the buoyant feeling and fanciful elements of her character were as incapable of being arranged according to rule as the sparkling water-drops are of being strung into necklaces and earrings, or the gay clouds of being made into artificial flowers. Some warm natural desire or taste of her own was forever interfering with her mother's régime; some obstinate little "Fannyism" would always put up its head in defiance of received custom; and, as her mother and sisters pathetically remarked, do what you would with her, she would always come out herself after all. After trying laboriously to conform to the pattern which was daily set before her, she came at last to the conclusion that some natural inferiority must forever prevent her aspiring to accomplish anything in that way.

"If I can't be what my mother wishes, I 'll at least be my-

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self," said she one day to her sisters, "for if I try to alter I shall neither be myself nor anybody else;" and on the whole her mother and sisters came to the same conclusion. And in truth they found it a very convenient thing to have one in the family who was not studying effect, or aspiring to be anything in particular. It was very agreeable to Mrs. Grey to have a daughter to sit with her when she had the sick headache, while the other girls were entertaining company in the drawing-room below. It was very convenient to her sisters to have some one whose dress took so little time that she had always a head and a pair of hands at their disposal in case of any toilet emergency. Then she was always loving and affectionate, entirely willing to be outtalked and outshone on every occasion; and that was another advantage.

As to Isabella and Emma, the sensation that they made in society was enough to have gratified a dozen ordinary belles. All that they said, and did, and wore, was instant and unquestionable precedent; and young gentlemen, all starch and perfume, twirled their laced pocket-handkerchiefs, and declared on their honor that they knew not which was the most overcoming, the genius and wit of Miss Emma, or the bright eyes of Miss Isabella; though it was an agreed point that, between them both, not a heart in the gay world remained in its owner's possession, — a thing which might have a serious sound to one who did not know the character of these articles, often the most trifling item in the inventory of worldly possessions. And, all this while, all that was said of our heroine was something in this way: "I believe there is another sister, — is there not?"

"Yes, there is a quiet little blue-eyed lady, who never has a word to say for herself, — quite amiable, I'm told."

Now, it was not a fact that Miss Fanny never had a word to say for herself. If people had seen her on a visit at any one of the houses along the little green street of her native

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village, they might have learned that her tongue could go fast enough.

But in lighted drawing-rooms, and among buzzing voices, and surrounded by people who were always saying things because such things were proper to be said, Fanny was always dizzy, and puzzled, and unready; and for fear that she would say something that she should not, she concluded to say nothing at all: nevertheless she made good use of her eyes, and found a very quiet amusement in looking on to see how other people conducted matters.

. . . . . .

Well, Mr. George Somers is actually arrived at Mrs. Grey's country seat, and there he sits with Miss Isabella in the deep recess of that window, where the white roses are peeping in so modestly.

"To be sure," thought Fanny to herself, as she quietly surveyed him looming up through the shade of a pair of magnificent whiskers, and heard him passing the shuttlecock of compliment back and forth with the most assured and practiced air in the world, — "to be sure, I was a child in imagining that I should see Cousin George Somers. I'm sure this magnificent young gentleman, full of all utterance and knowledge, is not the cousin that I used to feel so easy with; no, indeed;" and Fanny gave a half sigh, and then went out into the garden to water her geraniums.

For some days Mr. Somers seemed to feel put upon his reputation to sustain the character of gallant, savant, connoisseur, etc., which every one who makes the tour of the continent is expected to bring home as a matter of course; for there is seldom a young gentleman who knows he has qualifications in this line who can resist the temptation of showing what he can do. Accordingly he discussed tragedies, and reviews, and ancient and modern customs with Miss Emma; and with Miss Isabella retouched her drawings and exhibited his own; sported the most choice and recherché

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style of compliment at every turn; and, in short, flattered himself, perhaps justly, that he was playing the irresistible in a manner quite equal to that of his fair cousins.

Now, all this while Miss Fanny was mistaken in one point, for Mr. George Somers, though an exceedingly fine gentleman, had, after all, quite a substratum of reality about him of real heart, real feeling, and real opinion of his own; and the consequence was that, when tired of the effort of conversing, he really longed to find somebody to talk to; and in this mood he one evening strolled into the library, leaving the gay party in the drawing-room to themselves. Miss Fanny was there, quite intent upon a book of selections from the old English poets.

"Really, Miss Fanny," said Mr. Somers, "you are very sparing of the favor of your company to us this evening."

"Oh, I presume my company is not much missed," said Fanny with a smile.

"You must have a poor opinion of our taste, then," said Mr. Somers.

"Come, come, Mr. Somers," replied Fanny, "you forget the person you are talking to: it is not at all necessary for you to compliment me; nobody ever does, — so you may feel relieved of that trouble."

"Nobody ever does, Miss Fanny? pray, how is that?"

"Because I 'm not the sort of person to say such things to."

"And, pray, what sort of person ought one to be, in order to have such things said?" replied Mr. Somers.

"Why, like sister Isabella, or like Emma. You understand I am a sort of little nobody; if any one wastes fine words on me, I never know what to make of them."

"And, pray, what must one say to you?" said Mr. Somers quite amused.

"Why, what they really think and really feel; and I am always puzzled by anything else."

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Accordingly, about a half an hour afterwards, you might have seen the much-admired Mr. Somers once more transformed into the Cousin George, and he and Fanny engaged in a very interesting tête-à-tête about old times and things.

Now, you may skip across a fortnight from this evening and then look in at the same old library, just as the setting sun is looking in at its western window, and you will see Fanny sitting back a little in the shadow, with one straggling ray of light illuminating her pure childish face, and she is looking up at Mr. George Somers, as if in some sudden perplexity; and, dear me! if we are not mistaken, our young gentleman is blushing.

"Why, Cousin George," says the lady, "what *do* you mean?"

"I thought I spoke plainly enough, Fanny," replied Cousin George in a tone that might have made the matter plain enough, to be sure.

Fanny laughed outright, and the gentleman looked terribly serious.

"Indeed, now, don't be angry," said she, as he turned away with a vexed and mortified air; "indeed, now, I can't help laughing, it seems to me so odd; what *will* they all think of you?"

"It's of no consequence to me what they think," said Mr. Somers. "I think, Fanny, if you had the heart I gave you credit for, you might have seen my feelings before now."

"Now, do sit down, my dear cousin," said Fanny earnestly, drawing him into a chair, "and tell me, how could I, poor little Miss Fanny Nobody, how could I have thought any such thing with such sisters as I have? I did think that you liked me, that you knew more of my real feelings than mamma and sisters; but that you should — that you ever should — Why, I am astonished that you did not fall in love with Isabella."

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"That would have met your feelings, then?" said George eagerly, and looking as if he would have looked through her, eyes, soul, and all.

"No, no, indeed," she said, turning away her head; "but," added she quickly, "you 'll lose all your credit for good taste. Now, tell me, seriously, what do you like me for?"

"Well, then, Fanny, I can give you the best reason. I like you for being a real, sincere, natural girl — for being simple in your tastes, and simple in your appearance, and simple in your manners, and for having heart enough left, as I hope, to love plain George Somers, with all his faults, and not Mr. Somers's reputation, or Mr. Somers's establishment."

"Well, this is all very reasonable to me, of course," said Fanny, "but it will be so much Greek to poor mamma."

"I dare say your mother could never understand how seeing the very acme of cultivation in all countries should have really made my eyes ache, and long for something as simple as green grass or pure water to rest them on. I came down here to find it among my cousins, and I found in your sisters only just such women as I have seen and admired all over Europe, till I was tired of admiring. Your mother has achieved what she aimed at, perfectly; I know of no circle that could produce higher specimens; but it is all art, triumphant art, after all, and I have so strong a current of natural feeling running through my heart that I could never be happy except with a fresh, simple, impulsive character."

"Like me, you are going to say," said Fanny, laughing. "Well, I 'll admit that you are right. It would be a pity that you should not have one vote, at least."

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THE NEW YEAR'S GIFT

THE sparkling ice and snow covered hill and valley; tree and bush were glittering with diamonds, the broad, coarse rails of the fence shone like bars of solid silver, while little fringes of icicles glittered between each bar.

In the yard of yonder dwelling the scarlet berries of the mountain ash shine through a transparent casing of crystal, and the sable spruces and white pines, powdered and glittering with the frost, have assumed an icy brilliancy. The eaves of the house, the door-knocker, the pickets of the fence, the honeysuckles and syringas, once the boast of summer, are all alike polished, varnished, and resplendent with their winter trappings, now gleaming in the last rays of the early sunset.

Within that large, old-fashioned dwelling might you see an ample parlor, all whose adjustments and arrangements speak of security, warmth, and home enjoyment; of money spent not for show, but for comfort. Thick crimson curtains descend in heavy folds over the embrasures of the windows, and the ample hearth and wide fireplace speak of the customs of the good old times, ere that gloomy, unpoetic, unsocial gnome — the air-tight — had monopolized the place of the blazing fireside.

No dark air-tight, however, filled our ancient chimney; but there was a genuine old-fashioned fire of the most approved architecture, with a gallant backlog and forestick, supporting and keeping in order a crackling pile of dry wood, that was whirring and blazing warm welcome for all whom it might concern, occasionally bursting forth into

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most portentous and earnest snaps, which rung through the room with a genuine, hospitable emphasis, as if the fire was enjoying himself, and having a good time, and wanted all hands to draw up and make themselves at home with him.

So looked that parlor to me, when, tired with a long day's ride, I found my way into it, just at evening, and was greeted with a hearty welcome from my old friend, Colonel Winthrop. In addition to all that I have already described, let the reader add, if he pleases, the vision of a wide and ample tea-table, covered with a snowy cloth, on which the servants are depositing the evening meal. I had not seen Winthrop for years; but we were old college friends, and I had gladly accepted an invitation to renew our ancient intimacy by passing the New Year's season in his family. I found him still the same hale, kindly, cheery fellow as in days of old, though time had taken the same liberty with his handsome head that Jack Frost had with the cedars and spruces out of doors, in giving to it a graceful and becoming sprinkle of silver.

"Here you are, my dear fellow," said he, shaking me by both hands; "just in season for the ham and chickens — coffee all smoking. My dear," he added to a motherly-looking woman who now entered, "here 's John! I beg pardon, Mr. Stuart." As he spoke, two bold, handsome boys broke into the room, accompanied by a huge Newfoundland dog — all as full of hilarity and abundant animation as an afternoon of glorious skating could have generated.

"Ha, Tom and Ned! — you rogues — you don't want any supper to-night, I suppose," said the father gayly; "come up here and be introduced to my old friend. Here they come!" said he, as one by one the opening doors admitted the various children to the summons of the evening meal. "Here," presenting a tall young girl, "is our eldest, beginning to think herself a young lady, on the strength of being fifteen years old, and wearing her hair tucked up.

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And here is Eliza," said he, giving a pull to a blooming, roguish girl of ten, with large, saucy black eyes. "And here is Willie!" — a bashful, blushing little fellow in a checked apron. "And now, where's the little queen? — where's her majesty? — where's Ally?"

A golden head of curls was, at this instant, thrust timidly in at the door, and I caught a passing glimpse of a pair of great blue eyes; but the head, curls, eyes, and all, instantly vanished, though a little fat dimpled hand was seen holding on to the door, and swinging it back and forward. "Ally, dear, come in!" said the mother, in a tone of encouragement. "Come in, Ally! come in," was repeated in various tones, by each child; but brother Tom pushed open the door, and taking the little recusant in his arms, brought her fairly in, and deposited her on her father's knee. She took firm hold of his coat, and then turned and gazed shyly upon me — her large splendid blue eyes gleaming through her golden curls. It was evident that this was the pet lamb of the fold, and she was just at that age when babyhood is verging into childhood — an age often indefinitely prolonged in a large family, where the universal admiration that waits on every look, and motion, and word of the baby, and the multiplied monopolies and privileges of the baby estate, seem, by universal consent, to extend as long and as far as possible. And why not thus delay the little bark of the child among the flowery shores of its first Eden? — defer them as we may, the hard, the real, the cold commonplace of life comes on all too soon!

"This is our New Year's gift," said Winthrop, fondly caressing the curly head. "Ally, tell the gentleman how old you are."

"I s'all be four next New 'Ear's," said the little one, while all the circle looked applause.

"Ally, tell the gentleman what you are," said brother Ned.

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Ally looked coquettishly at me, as if she did not know whether she should favor me to that extent, and the young princess was further solicited.

"Tell him what Ally is," said the oldest sister, with a patronizing air.

"Papa's New 'Ear's p'esent," said my little lady, at last.

"And mamma's, too!" said the mother gently, amid the applauses of the admiring circle.

Winthrop looked apologetically at me, and said, "We all spoil her — that 's a fact — every one of us down to Rover, there, who lets her tie tippets round his neck, and put bonnets on his head, and hug and kiss him, to a degree that would disconcert any other dog in the world."

If ever beauty and poetic grace was an apology for spoiling, it was in this case. Every turn of the bright head, every change of the dimpled face and round and chubby limbs, was a picture; and within the little form was shrined a heart full of love, and running over with compassion and good will for every breathing thing; with feelings so sensitive, that it was papa's delight to make her laugh and cry with stories, and to watch in the blue, earnest mirror of her eye every change and turn of his narration, as he took her through long fairy tales, and old-fashioned giant and ghost legends, purely for his own amusement, and much reprimanded all the way by mamma, for filling the child's head with nonsense.

It was now, however, time to turn from the beauty to the substantial realities of the supper table. I observed that Ally's high chair was stationed close by her father's side; and ever and anon, while gayly talking, he would slip into her rosy little mouth some choice bit from his plate, these notices and attentions seeming so instinctive and habitual, that they did not for a moment interrupt the thread of the conversation. Once or twice I caught a glimpse of Rover's great rough nose, turned anxiously up to the little chair;

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whereat the small white hand forthwith slid something into his mouth, though by what dexterity it ever came out from the great black jaws undevoured was a mystery. When the supply of meat on the small lady's plate was exhausted, I observed the little hand slyly slipping into her father's provision grounds, and with infinite address abstracting small morsels, whereat there was much mysterious winking between the father and the other children, and considerable tittering among the younger ones, though all in marvelous silence, as it was deemed best policy not to appear to notice Ally's tricks, lest they should become too obstreperous.

In the course of the next day I found myself, to all intents and purposes, as much part and parcel of the family as if I had been born and bred among them. I found that I had come in a critical time, when secrets were plenty as blackberries. It being New Year's week, all the little hoarded resources of the children, both of money and of ingenuity, were in brisk requisition, getting up New Year's presents for each other, and for father and mother. The boys had their little tin savings banks, where all the stray pennies of the year had been carefully hoarded — all that had been got by blacking papa's boots, or by piling wood, or weeding in the garden — mingled with some fortunate additions which had come as windfalls from some liberal guest or friend. All now were poured out daily, on tables, on chairs, on stools, and counted over with wonderful earnestness.

My friend, though in easy circumstances, was somewhat old-fashioned in his notions. He never allowed his children spending money, except such as they fairly earned by some exertions of their own. "Let them do something," he would say, "to make it fairly theirs, and their generosity will then have some significance — it is very easy for children to be generous on their parents' money." Great were the comparing of resources and estimates of property at this

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time. Tom and Ned, who were big enough to saw wood and hoe in the garden, had accumulated the vast sum of three dollars each, and walked about with their hands in their pockets, and talked largely of purchases, like gentlemen of substance. They thought of getting mamma a new muff, and papa a writing-desk, besides trinkets innumerable for sisters, and a big doll for Ally; but after they had made one expedition to a neighboring town to inquire prices, I observed that their expectations were greatly moderated. As to little Willie, him of the checked apron, his whole earthly substance amounted to thirty-seven cents; yet there was not a member of the whole family circle, including the servants, that he could find it in his heart to leave out of his remembrance. I ingratiated myself with him immediately; and twenty times a day did I count over his money to him, and did sums innumerable to show how much would be left if he got this, that, or the other article, which he was longing to buy for father or mother. I proved to him most invaluable, by helping him to think of certain small sixpenny and fourpenny articles that would be pretty to give to sisters, making out with marbles for Tom and Ned, and a very valiant-looking sugar horse for Ally. Miss Emma had the usual resource of young ladies, flosses, worsted, and knitting, and crochet needles, and busy fingers, and she was giving private lessons daily to Eliza, to enable her to get up some napkin-rings and bookmarks for the all-important occasion. A gentle air of bustle and mystery pervaded the whole circle. I was intrusted with so many secrets that I could scarcely make an observation, or take a turn about the room, without being implored to "remember" — "not to tell" — not to let papa know this, or mamma that. I was not to let papa know how the boys were going to buy him a new inkstand, with a pen-rack upon it, which was entirely to outshine all previous inkstands; nor tell mamma about the crochet bag that Emma was knitting for her. On all

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sides were mysterious whisperings, and showing of things wrapped in brown paper, glimpses of which, through some inadvertence, were always appearing to the public eye. There were close councils held behind doors and in corners, and suddenly broken off when some particular member of the family appeared. There were flutters of vanishing book-marks, which were always whisked away when a door opened; and incessant ejaculations of admiration and astonishment from one privileged looker or another on things which might not be mentioned to or beheld by others.

Papa and mamma behaved with the utmost circumspection and discretion, and though surrounded on all sides by such pitfalls and labyrinths of mystery, moved about with an air of the most unconscious simplicity possible. But little Ally, from her privileged character, became a very spoil-sport in the proceedings. Her small fingers were always pulling open parcels prematurely, or lifting pocket-handkerchiefs ingeniously thrown down over mysterious articles, and thus disconcerting the very profoundest surprises that ever were planned; and were it not that she was still within the bounds of the kingly state of babyhood, and therefore could be held to do no wrong, she would certainly have fallen into general disgrace; but then it was "Ally," and that was apology for all things, and the exploit was related in half whispers as so funny, so cunning, that Miss Curlypate was in no wise disconcerted at the head-shakes and "naughty Allys" that visited her offenses.

"What dis?" said she, one morning, as she was rummaging over some packages indiscreetly left on the sofa.

"Oh, Emma! see Ally!" exclaimed Eliza, darting forward; but too late, for the flaxen curls and blue eyes of a wax doll had already appeared.

"Now she 'll know all about it," said Eliza despairingly.

Ally looked in astonishment, as dolly's visage promptly disappeared from her view, and then turned to pursue her

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business in another quarter of the room, where, spying something glittering under the sofa, she forthwith pulled out and held up to public view a crotchet bag sparkling with innumerable steel fringes.

"Oh, what be dis?" she exclaimed again.

Miss Emma sprang to the rescue, while all the other children, with a burst of exclamations, turned their eyes on mamma. Mamma very prudently did not turn her head, and appeared to be lost in reflection, though she must have been quite deaf not to have heard the loud whispers, "It's mamma's bag! only think! Don't you think, Tom, Ally pulled out mamma's bag, and held it right up before her! Don't you think she'll find out?"

Master Tom valued himself greatly on the original and profound ways he had of adapting his presents to the tastes of the receiver without exciting suspicion: for example, he would come up into his mother's room, all booted and coated for a ride to town, jingling his purse gleefully, and begin, —

"Mother, mother, which do you like best, pink or blue?"

"That might depend on circumstances, my son."

"Well, but, mother, for a neck ribbon, for example; suppose somebody was going to buy you a neck ribbon."

"Why, blue would be the most suitable for me, I think."

"Well, but mother, which should you think was the best, a neck ribbon or a book?"

"What book? It would depend something on that."

"Why, as good a book as a fellow could get for thirty-seven cents," says Tom.

"Well, on the whole, I think I should prefer the ribbon."

"There, Ned," says Tom, coming down the stairs, "I've found out just what mother wants, without telling her a word about it."

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But the crowning mystery of all the great family arcana, the thing that was going to astonish papa and mamma past all recovery, was certain projected bookmarks, that little Ally was going to be made to work for them. This bold scheme was projected by Miss Emma, and she had armed herself with a whole paper of sugar plums, to be used as adjuvants to moral influence, in case the discouragements of the undertaking should prove too much for Ally's patience.

As to Ally, she felt all the dignity of the enterprise — her whole little soul was absorbed in it. Seated on Emma's knee with the needle between her little fat fingers, and holding the board very tight, as if she was afraid it would run away from her, she very gravely and carefully stuck the needle in every place but the right — pricked her pretty fingers — ate sugar plums — stopping now to pat Rover, and now to stroke pussy — letting fall her thimble, and bustling down to pick it up — occasionally taking an episodical race round the room with Rover, during which time sister Emma added a stitch or two to the work. I would not wish to have been required, on oath, to give in my undisguised opinion as to the number of stitches the little one really put into her present, but she had a most genuine and firm conviction that she worked every stitch of it herself; and when, on returning from a scamper with pussy, she found one or two letters finished, she never doubted that the whole was of her own execution, and, of course, thought that working bookmarks was one of the most delightful occupations in the world. It was all that her little heart could do to keep from papa and mamma the wonderful secret. Every evening she would bustle about her father with an air of such great mystery, and seek to pique his curiosity by most skillful hints, such as, —

"I know somefing! but I s'ant tell you."

"Not tell me! Oh, Ally! Why not?"

"Oh, it 's about — a New 'Ear's p'es—"

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"Ally, Ally," resounds from several voices, "don't you tell."

"No, I s'an't — but you are going to have a New 'Ear's p'esant, and so is mamma, and you can't dess what it is."

"Can't I?"

"No, and I s'an't tell you."

"Now, Ally," said papa, pretending to look aggrieved.

"Well, it 's going to be — somefin worked."

"Ally, be careful," said Emma.

"Yes, I 'll be very tareful; it 's somefin — *weall* pretty — somefin to put in a book. You 'll find out about it by and by."

"I think I 'm in a fair way to," said the father.

The conversation now digressed to other subjects, and the nurse came in to take Ally to bed; who, as she kissed her father, in the fullness of her heart, added a fresh burst of information. "Papa," said she, in an earnest whisper, "that *fin* is about so long" — measuring on her fat little arm.

"A *fin*, Ally? Why, you are not going to give me a fish, are you?"

"I mean that thing," said Ally, speaking the word with great effort, and getting quite red in the face.

"Oh, that thing; I beg pardon, my lady; that puts another face on the communication," said the father, stroking her head fondly, as he bade her good-night.

"The child can talk plainer than she does," said the father, "but we are all so delighted with her little Hottentot dialect, that I don't know but she will keep it up till she is twenty."

. . . . . .

It now wanted only three days of the New Year, when a sudden and deadly shadow fell on the dwelling, late so busy and joyous — a shadow from the grave; and it fell on the flower of the garden — the star — the singing bird — the loved and loving Ally.

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She was stricken down at once, in the flush of her innocent enjoyment, by a fever, which from the first was ushered in with symptoms the most fearful. All the bustle of preparation ceased — the presents were forgotten or lay about unfinished, as if no one now had a heart to put their hand to anything; while up in her little crib lay the beloved one, tossing and burning with restless fever, and without power to recognize any of the loved faces that bent over her. The doctor came twice a day, with a heavy step, and a face in which anxious care was too plainly written; and while he was there each member of the circle hung with anxious, imploring faces about him, as if to entreat him to save their darling; but still the deadly disease held on its relentless course, in spite of all that could be done.

"I thought myself prepared to meet God's will in any form it might come," said Winthrop to me; "but this one thing I had forgotten. It never entered into my head that my little Ally could die."

The evening before New Year's, the deadly disease seemed to be progressing more rapidly than ever; and when the doctor came for his evening call, he found all the family gathered in mournful stillness around the little crib.

"I suppose," said the father, with an effort to speak calmly, "that this may be her last night with us."

The doctor made no answer, and the whole circle of brothers and sisters broke out into bitter weeping.

"It is just possible that she may live till to-morrow," said the doctor.

"To-morrow — her birthday!" said the mother. "Oh, Ally, Ally!"

Wearily passed the watches of that night. Each brother and sister had kissed the pale little cheek, to bid farewell, and gone to their rooms, to sob themselves to sleep; and the father and mother and doctor alone watched around the bed. Oh, what a watch is that which despairing love keeps,

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waiting for death! Poor Rover, the companion of Ally's gayer hours, resolutely refused to be excluded from the sick-chamber. Stretched under the little crib, he watched with unsleeping eyes every motion of the attendants, and as often as they rose to administer medicine, or change the pillow, or bathe the head, he would rise also, and look anxiously over the side of the crib, as if he understood all that was passing.

About an hour past midnight, the child began to change; her moans became fainter and fainter, her restless movements ceased, and a deep and heavy sleep settled upon her.

The parents looked wistfully on the doctor. "It is the last change," he said; "she will probably pass away before the daybreak."

Heavier and deeper grew that sleep, and to the eye of the anxious watchers the little face grew paler and paler; yet by degrees the breathing became regular and easy, and a gentle moisture began to diffuse itself over the whole surface. A new hope began to dawn on the minds of the parents, as they pointed out these symptoms to the doctor.

"All things are possible with God," said he, in answer to the inquiring looks he met, "and it may be that she will yet live."

An hour more passed, and the rosy glow of the New Year's morning began to blush over the snowy whiteness of the landscape. Far off from the window could be seen the kindling glow of a glorious sunrise, looking all the brighter for the dark pines that half veiled it from view; and now a straight and glittering beam shot from the east into the still chamber. It fell on the golden hair and pale brow of the child, lighting it up as if an angel had smiled on it; and slowly the large blue eyes unclosed, and gazed dreamily around.

"Ally, Ally," said the father, bending over her, trembling with excitement.

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"You are going to have a New 'Ear's p'esent," whispered the little one, faintly smiling.

"I believe from my heart that you are, sir!" said the doctor, who stood with his fingers on her pulse; "she has passed through the crisis of the disease, and we may hope."

A few hours turned this hope to glad certainty; for with the elastic rapidity of infant life, the signs of returning vigor began to multiply, and ere evening the little one was lying in her father's arms, answering with languid smiles to the overflowing proofs of tenderness which every member of the family was showering upon her.

"See, my children," said the father gently, "this dear one is our New Year's present. What can we render to God in return?"

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OUR WOOD LOT IN WINTER

Our wood lot! Yes, we have arrived at the dignity of owning a wood lot, and for us simple folk there is something invigorating in the thought. To own even a small spot of our dear old mother earth hath in it a relish of something stimulating to human nature. To own a meadow, with all its thousandfold fringes of grasses, its broidery of monthly flowers, and its outriders of birds, and bees, and gold-winged insects — this is something that establishes one's heart. To own a clover patch or a buckwheat field is like possessing a self-moving manufactory for perfumes and sweetness; but a wood lot, rustling with dignified old trees — it makes a man rise in his own esteem; he might take off his hat to himself at the moment of acquisition.

We do not marvel that the land-acquiring passion becomes a mania among our farmers, and particularly we do not wonder at a passion for wood land. That wide, deep chasm of conscious self-poverty and emptiness which lies at the bottom of every human heart, making men crave property as something to add to one's own bareness, and to ballast one's own specific levity, is sooner filled by land than anything else.

Your hoary New England farmer walks over his acres with a grim satisfaction. He sets his foot down with a hard stamp; here is reality. No moonshine bank stock! no swindling railroads! Here is his bank, and there is no defaulter here. All is true, solid, and satisfactory; he seems anchored to this life by it. So Pope, with fine tact, makes the old miser, making his will on his deathbed, after

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parting with everything, die, clinging to the possession of his *land*. He disposes with many a groan of this and that house, and this and that stock and security; but at last the *manor* is proposed to him.

"'The manor! hold!' he cried,
'Not that; I cannot part with that!'—and died!"

In such terms we discoursed yesterday, Herr Professor and myself, while jogging along in an old-fashioned chaise to inspect a few acres of wood lot, the acquisition of which had led us, with great freshness, into these reflections. Does any fair lady shiver at the idea of a drive to the woods on the first of February? Let me assure her that in the coldest season Nature never wants her ornaments, full worth looking at. See here, for instance — let us stop the old chaise, and get out a minute to look at this brook — one of our last summer's pets. What is he doing this winter? Let us at least say, "How do you do?" to him. Ah, here he is! and he and Jack Frost together have been turning the little gap in the old stone wall, through which he leaped down to the road, into a little grotto of Antiparos. Some old rough rails and boards that dropped over it are sheathed in plates of transparent silver. The trunks of the black alders are mailed with crystal; and the witch-hazel, and yellow osiers fringing its sedgy borders, are likewise shining through their glossy covering. Around every stem that rises from the water is a glittering ring of ice. The tags of the alder and the red berries of last summer's wild roses glitter now like a lady's pendant. As for the brook, he is wide awake and joyful; and where the roof of sheet ice breaks away, you can see his yellow-brown waters rattling and gurgliug among the stones as briskly as they did last July. Down he springs! over the glossy-coated stone wall, throwing new sparkles into the fairy grotto around him; and widening daily from melting snows, and such other godsends, he goes chattering off under yonder mossy stone

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bridge, and we lose sight of him. It might be fancy, but it seemed that our watery friend tipped us a cheery wink as he passed, saying, "Fine weather, sir, and madam; nice times these; and in April you 'll find us all right; the flowers are making up their finery for the next season; there 's to be a splendid display in a month or two."

Then the cloud lights of a wintry sky have a clear purity and brilliancy that no other months can rival. The rose tints, and the shading of rose tint into gold, the flossy, filmy accumulation of illuminated vapor that drifts across the sky in a January afternoon, are beauties far exceeding those of summer.

Neither are trees, as seen in winter, destitute of their own peculiar beauty. If it be a gorgeous study in summer-time to watch the play of their abundant leafage, we still may thank winter for laying bare before us the grand and beautiful anatomy of the tree, with all its interlacing net-work of boughs, knotted on each twig with the buds of next year's promise. The fleecy and rosy clouds look all the more beautiful through the dark lace veil of yonder magnificent elms; and the down-drooping drapery of yonder willow hath its own grace of outline as it sweeps the bare snows. And these comical old apple-trees, why, in summer they look like so many plump, green cushions, one as much like another as possible; but under the revealing light of winter every characteristic twist and jerk stands disclosed.

One might moralize on this — how affliction, which strips us of all ornaments and accessories, and brings us down to the permanent and solid wood of our nature, develops such wide differences in people who before seemed not much distinct. But here! our pony's feet are now clinking on the icy path under the shadow of the white pines of "our wood lot." The path runs in a deep hollow, and on either hand rise slopes dark and sheltered with the fragrant white pine. White pines are favorites with us for many

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good reasons. We love their balsamic breath, the long, slender needles of their leaves, and, above all, the constant sibylline whisperings that never cease among their branches. In summer the ground beneath them is paved with a soft and cleanly matting of their last year's leaves; and then their talking seems to be of coolness ever dwelling far up in their fringy, waving hollows. And now, in winter-time, we find the same smooth floor; for the heavy curtains above shut out the snow, and the same voices above whisper of shelter and quiet. "You are welcome," they say; "the north wind is gone to sleep; we are rocking him in our cradles. Sit down and be quiet from the cold." At the feet of these slumberous old pines we find many of our last summer's friends looking as good as new. The small, round-leafed partridge-berry weaves its viny mat, and lays out its scarlet fruit, and here are blackberry vines with leaves still green, though with a bluish tint, not unlike what invades mortal noses in such weather. Here, too, are the bright, varnished leaves of the Indian pine, and the vines of feathery green of which our Christmas garlands are made; and here, undaunted, though frozen to the very heart this cold day, is many another leafy thing which we met last summer rejoicing each in its own peculiar flower. What names they have received from scientific godfathers at the botanic fount we know not; we have always known them by fairy nicknames of our own — the pet names of endearment which lie between Nature's children and us in her domestic circle.

There is something peculiarly sweet to us about a certain mystical dreaminess and obscurity in these wild wood tribes, which we never wish to have brought out into the daylight of absolute knowledge. Every one of them was a self-discovered treasure of our childhood, as much our own as if God had made it on purpose and presented it; and it was ever a part of the joy to think we had found something that

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no one else knew, and so musing on them, we gave them names in our heart. We search about amid the sere, yellow skeletons of last summer's ferns, if haply winter have forgotten one green leaf for our home vase; in vain we rake, freezing our fingers through our fur gloves — there is not one. An icicle has pierced every heart; and there are no fern leaves except those miniature ones which each plant is holding in its heart, to be sent up in next summer's hour of joy. But here are mosses — tufts of all sorts; the white, crisp and crumbling, fair as winter frostwork; and here the feathery green of which French milliners make moss-rose buds; and here the cup-moss — these we gather with some care, frozen as they are to the wintry earth.

Now, stumbling up this ridge, we come to a little patch of hemlocks, spreading out their green wings, and making, in the ravine, a deep shelter, where many a fresh springing thing is standing, and where we gain much for our home vases. These pines are motherly creatures. One can think how it must rejoice the heart of a partridge or a rabbit to come from the dry, whistling sweep of a deciduous forest under the home-like shadow of their branches. "As for the stork, the fir-trees are her house," says the Hebrew poet; and our fir-trees, this winter, give shelter to much small game. Often, on the light-fallen snow, I meet their little footprints. They have a naïve, helpless, innocent appearance, these little tracks, that softens my heart like a child's footprint. Not one of them is forgotten of our Father; and therefore I remember them kindly.

And now with cold toes and fingers, and arms full of leafy treasures, we plod our way back to the chaise. A pleasant song is in my ears from this old wood lot — it speaks of green and cheerful patience in life's hard weather. Not a scowling, sullen endurance, not a despairing, hand-dropping resignation, but a heart cheerfulness that holds on

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to every leaf, and twig, and flower, and bravely smiles and keeps green when frozen to the very heart, knowing that the winter is but for a season, and that the sunshine and bird singings shall return, and the last year's dry flower stalk give place to the risen, glorified flower.

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THE MOURNING-VEIL

"Then in life's goblet freely press
The leaves that give it bitterness,
Nor prize the colored waters less,
For in thy darkness and distress
New light and strength they give!

"And he who has not learned to know
How false its sparkling bubbles show,
How bitter are the drops of woe,
With which its brim may overflow,
He has not learned to live.

LONGFELLOW.

IT was sunset. The day had been one of the sultriest of August. It would seem as if the fierce alembic of the last twenty-four hours had melted it like the pearl in the golden cup of Cleopatra, and it lay in the west a fused mass of transparent brightness. The reflection from the edges of a hundred clouds wandered hither and thither, over rock and tree and flower, giving a strange, unearthly brilliancy to the most familiar things.

A group of children had gathered about their mother in the summer-house of a garden which faced the sunset sky. The house was one of those square, stately, wooden structures, white, with green blinds, in which of old times the better classes of New England delighted, and which remain to us as memorials of a respectable past. It stood under the arches of two gigantic elms, and was flanked on either side with gardens and grounds which seemed designed on purpose for hospitality and family freedom. The evening light colored huge bouquets of petunias, which stood with their white or crimson faces looking westward, as if they

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were thinking creatures. It illumined flame-colored verbenas, and tall columns of pink and snowy phloxes, and hedges of August roses, making them radiant as the flowers of a dream.

The group in the summer-house requires more particular attention. The father and mother, whom we shall call Albert and Olivia, were of the wealthiest class of the neighboring city, and had been induced by the facility of railroad traveling, and a sensible way of viewing things, to fix their permanent residence in the quiet little village of Q——. Albert had nothing in him different from multitudes of hearty, joyous, healthily constituted men, who subsist upon daily newspapers, and find the world a most comfortable place to live in. As to Olivia, she was in the warm noon of life, and a picture of vitality and enjoyment. A plump, firm cheek, a dark eye, a motherly fullness of form, spoke the being made to receive and enjoy the things of earth, the warm-hearted wife, the indulgent mother, the hospitable mistress of the mansion. It is true that the smile on the lip had something of earthly pride blended with womanly sweetness, — the pride of one who has as yet known only prosperity and success, to whom no mischance has yet shown the frail basis on which human hopes are built. Her foot had as yet trod only the high places of life, but she walked there with a natural grace and nobleness that made every one feel that she was made for them and they for her.

Around the parents were gathered at this moment a charming group of children, who with much merriment were proceeding to undo a bundle the father had just brought from the city.

"Here, Rose," said little Amy, a blue-eyed, flaxen-haired pet, who seemed to be a privileged character, "let *me* come; don't be all night with your orderly ways; let me cut that string." A sharp flash of the scissors, a quick report of the bursting string, and the package lay opened to the little

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marauder. Rose drew back, smiled, and gave an indulgent look at her eager younger sister and the two little ones who immediately gathered around. She was one of those calm, thoughtful, womanly young girls, that seem born for pattern elder sisters, and for the stay and support of mother's hearts. She watched with a gentle, quiet curiosity the quick and eager fingers that soon were busy in exposing the mysteries of the parcel.

"There's a dress for Rose," said Amy, triumphantly drawing out a delicate muslin; "I can always tell what's for her."

"How?" put in the father, who stood regarding the proceeding with that air of amused superiority with which the wearers of broadcloth look down on the mysteries of muslin and barège.

"How?" said Amy, "why, because they look just like her. If I were to see that lilac muslin in China, I should say it was meant for Rose. Now this is mine, I know — this bright pink; is n't it, mamma? No half shades about me!"

"No, indeed," said her mother; "that is your greatest fault, Amy."

"Oh, well, mamma, Rose has enough for both; you must rub us together, as they do light red and Prussian blue, to make a neutral tint. But oh, what a ribbon! oh, mother, what a love of a ribbon! Rose! Rose! look at this ribbon! And oh, those buttons! Fred, I do believe they are for your new coat! Oh, and those studs, father, where did you get them? What's in that box? a bracelet for Rose, I know! oh, how beautiful! perfectly exquisite! And here — oh!"

Here something happened to check the volubility of the little speaker; for as she hastily, and with the license of a petted child, pulled the articles from the parcel, she was startled to find lying among the numerous colored things a

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black crape veil. Sombre, dark, and ill-omened enough it looked there, with pink, and lilac, and blue, and glittering bijouterie around it!

Amy dropped it with instinctive repugnance, and there was a general exclamation, "Mamma, what's this? how came it here? what did you get this for?"

"Strange!" said Olivia; "it is a mourning-veil. Of course I did not order it. How it came in here nobody knows; it must have been a mistake of the clerk."

"Certainly it is a mistake," said Amy; "we have nothing to do with mourning, have we?"

"No, to be sure; what should we mourn for?" chimed in little Fred and Mary.

"What a dark, ugly thing it is!" said Amy, unfolding and throwing it over her head; "how dismal it must be to see the world through such a veil as this!"

"And yet till one has seen the world through a veil like that, one has never truly lived," said another voice, joining in the conversation.

"Ah, Father Payson, are you there?" said two or three voices at once.

Father Payson was the minister of the village, and their nearest neighbor; and not only their nearest neighbor, but their nearest friend. In the afternoon of his years, life's day with him now stood at that hour when, though the shadows fall eastward, yet the colors are warmer, and the songs of the birds sweeter, than even in its jubilant morning.

God sometimes gives to good men a guileless and holy second childhood, in which the soul becomes childlike, not childish, and the faculties in full fruit and ripeness are mellow without sign of decay. This is that songful land of Beulah, where they who have traveled manfully the Christian way abide awhile to show the world a perfected manhood. Life, with its battles and its sorrows, lies far behind

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them; the soul has thrown off its armor, and sits in an evening undress of calm and holy leisure. Thrice blessed the family or neighborhood that numbers among it one of these not yet ascended saints! Gentle are they and tolerant, apt to play with little children, easy to be pleased with simple pleasures, and with a pitying wisdom guiding those who err. New England has been blessed in numbering many such among her country pastors; and a spontaneous, instinctive deference honors them with the title of Father.

Father Payson was the welcome inmate of every family in the village, the chosen friend even of the young and thoughtless. He had stories for children, jokes for the young, and wisdom for all. He "talked good," as the phrase goes, — not because he was the minister, but because, being good, he could not help it; yet his words, unconsciously to himself, were often parables, because life to him had become all spiritualized, and he saw sacred meanings under worldly things.

The children seized him lovingly by either hand and seated him in the arbor.

"Is n't it strange," said Amy, "to see this ugly black thing among all these bright colors? such a strange mistake in the clerk!"

"If one were inclined to be superstitious," said Albert, "he might call this an omen."

"What did you mean, sir," asked Rose, quietly seating herself at his feet, "by 'seeing life through this veil'?"

"It was a parable, my daughter," he said, laying his hand on her head.

"I never have had any deep sorrow," said Olivia musingly; "we have been favored ones hitherto. But why did you say one must see the world through such a medium as this?"

"Sorrow is God's school," said the old man. "Even God's own Son was not made perfect without it; though a

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son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered. Many of the brightest virtues are like stars; there must be night or they cannot shine. Without suffering, there could be no fortitude, no patience, no compassion, no sympathy. Take all sorrow out of life, and you take away all richness and depth and tenderness. Sorrow is the furnace that melts selfish hearts together in love. Many are hard and inconsiderate, not because they lack capability of feeling, but because the vase that holds the sweet waters has never been broken."

"Is it, then, an imperfection and misfortune never to have suffered?" said Olivia.

Father Payson looked down. Rose was looking into his face. There was a bright, eager, yet subdued expression in her eyes that struck him; it had often struck him before in the village church. It was as if his words had awakened an internal angel, that looked fluttering out behind them. Rose had been from childhood one of those thoughtful, listening children with whom one seems to commune without words. We spend hours talking with them, and fancy they have said many things to us, which, on reflection, we find have been said only with their silent answering eyes. Those who talk much often reply to you less than those who silently and thoughtfully listen. And so it came to pass that, on account of this quietly absorbent nature, Rose had grown to her parents' hearts with a peculiar nearness. Eighteen summers had perfected her beauty. The miracle of the growth and perfection of a human body and soul never waxes old; parents marvel at it in every household as if a child had never grown before; and so Olivia and Albert looked on their fair Rose daily with a restful and trusting pride.

At this moment she laid her hand on Father Payson's knee, and said earnestly, "Ought we to pray for sorrow, then?"

"Oh, no, no, no!" interrupted Olivia, with an instinc-

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tive shudder, — such a shudder as a warm, earnest, prosperous heart always gives as the shadow of the grave falls across it, — "don't say yes!"

"I do not say we should pray for it," said Father Payson; "yet the Master says, 'Blessed are they that mourn,' not 'Blessed are they that prosper.' So heaven and earth differ in their judgments."

"Ah, me!" said Olivia; "I am afraid I have not courage to wish to be among the blessed."

"Well," said Albert, whom the gravity of the discussion somewhat disturbed, "let us not borrow trouble; time enough to think of it when it happens. Come, the dew is falling, let us go in. I want to show Father Payson some peaches that will tempt his Christian graces to envy. Come, Rose, gather up here."

Rose, in a few moments, gathered the parcel together, and quietly flitted before them into the house.

"Now," said Albert, "you 'll see that girl will have everything quietly tucked away in just the right place; not a word said. She is a born housewife; it 's in her, as much as it is in a pointer to show game."

"Rose is my right hand," said Olivia; "I should be lost without her."

Whence comes it that, just on the verge of the great crises and afflictions of life, words are often spoken that, to afterview, seem to have had a prophetic meaning? So often do we hear people saying, "Ah, the very day before I heard of this or that, we were saying so and so!" It would seem sometimes as if the soul felt itself being drawn within the dark sphere of a coming evil, of which as yet nothing outward tells. Then the thoughts and conversation flow in an almost prophetic channel, which a coming future too well interprets.

The evening passed cheerfully with our friends, notwithstanding the grave conversation in the arbor. The mourn-

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ing-veil was laid away in a drawer along with many of its brilliant companions, and with it the thoughts it had suggested; and the merry laugh ringing from the half-open parlor-door showed that Father Payson was no despiser of the command to rejoice with them that do rejoice. Rose played and sung, the children danced, and the mirth was prolonged till a late hour in the evening. Olivia and Albert were lingering in the parlor after the departure of the family, busy in shutting windows, setting back chairs, and attending to all the last duties of orderly householders. A sudden shriek startled them; such a shriek as, once heard, is never forgotten. With an answering cry of horror, they rushed up the stairs. The hall lamp had been extinguished, but the passage and staircase were red with a broad glare from the open door of the nursery. A moment more showed them the drapery of the bed in which their youngest child was sleeping all in flames; then they saw a light form tearing down the blazing curtains.

"Oh, Rose! Rose! take care, for God's sake! your dress! you 'll kill yourself! oh, God help us!"

There were a few moments — awful moments of struggle — when none knew or remembered what they did; a moment more and Rose lay panting in her father's arms, enveloped in a thick blanket which he had thrown around her burning nightdress. The fire was extinguished, the babe lay unawakened, and only the dark flecks of tinder scattered over the bed, and the trampled mass on the floor, told what had been. But Rose had breathed the hot breath of the flame, deadly to human life, and no water could quench that inward fire.

A word serves to explain all. The child's nurse had carelessly set a lamp too near the curtains, and the night breeze had wafted them into the flame. The apartment of Rose opened into the nursery, and as she stood in her nightdress before her mirror, arranging her hair, she saw the

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flashing of the flame, and, in the one idea of saving her little sister, forgot every other. That act of self-forgetfulness was her last earthly act; a few short hours of patient suffering were all that remained to her. Peacefully as she had lived she died, looking tenderly on her parents out of her large blue eyes, and only intent to soothe their pain.

"Yes, I suffer," she said, "but only a short pain. We must all suffer something. My Father thinks a very little enough for me. I have had such a happy life, I might bear just a little pain at the last."

A little later her mind seemed to wander. "Mamma, mamma," she said hurriedly, "I put the things all away; the lilac muslin and the barège. Mamma, that veil, the mourning-veil, is in the drawer. Oh, mamma, that veil was for you; don't refuse it; our Father sends it, and he knows best. Perhaps you will see heaven through that veil."

It is appalling to think how near to the happiest and most prosperous scene of life stands the saddest despair. All homes are haunted with awful possibilities, for whose realization no array of threatening agents is required, — no lightning, or tempest, or battle; a peaceful household lamp, a gust of perfumed evening air, a false step in a moment of gayety, a draught taken by mistake, a match overlooked or mislaid, a moment's oversight in handling a deadly weapon, — and the whole scene of life is irretrievably changed! It was but a day after the scene in the arbor, and all was mourning in the so lately happy, hospitable house; everybody looked through tears. There were subdued breathings, a low murmur, as of many listeners, a voice of prayer, and the wail of a funeral hymn, — and then the heavy tread of bearers, as, beneath the black pall, *she* was carried over the threshold of her home, never to return.

And Olivia and Albert came forth behind their dead. The folds of the dark veil seemed a refuge for the mother's sorrow. But how did the flowers of home, the familiar elms,

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the distant smiling prospect look through its gloomy folds, — emblem of the shadow which had fallen between her heart and life? When she looked at the dark moving hearse, she wondered that the sun still shone, that birds could sing, and that even her own flowers could be so bright.

Ah, mother! the world had been just as full of sorrow the day before; the air as full of "farewells to the dying and mournings for the dead;" but thou knewest it not! Now the outer world comes to thee through the mourning veil!

But after the funeral comes life again, — hard, cold, inexorable life, knocking with business-like sound at the mourner's door, obtruding its commonplace pertinacity on the dull ear of sorrow. The world cannot wait for us; the world knows no leisure for tears; it moves onward, and drags along with its motion the weary and heavy-laden who would fain rest. Olivia would have buried herself in her sorrows. There are those who refuse to be comforted. The condolence of friends seems only a mockery; and truly, nothing so shows the emptiness and poverty of human nature as its efforts at condolence.

Father Payson, however, was a visitor who would not be denied; there was something of gentle authority in his white hairs that might not be resisted. Old, and long-schooled in sorrow, his heart many times broken in past years, he knew all the ways of mourning. His was no official commonplace about "afflictive dispensations." He came first with that tender and reverent silence with which the man acquainted with grief approaches the divine mysteries of sorrow; and from time to time he cast on the troubled waters words, dropped like seeds, not for present fruitfulness, but to germinate after the floods had subsided. He watched beside a soul in affliction as a mother waits on the crisis of a fever whose turning is to be for life or for death; for he well knew that great sorrows never leave us as they find us; that

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the broken spirit, ill set, grows callous and distorted ever after. He had wise patience with every stage of sorrow; he knew that at first the soul is blind, and deaf, and dumb. He was not alarmed when returning vitality showed itself only in moral spasms and convulsions; for in all great griefs come hours of conflict, when the soul is tempted, and complaining, murmuring, dark, skeptical thoughts are whirled like withered leaves through all its desolate chambers.

"What have I learned by looking through this veil?" said Olivia to him bitterly, one day when they were coming out of a house where they had been visiting a mourning family. "I was trusting in God as an indulgent Father; life seemed beautiful to me in the light of His goodness; now I see only His inflexible severity. I never knew before how much mourning and sorrow there had been even in this little village. There is scarcely a house where something dreadful has not at some time happened. How many families here have been called to mourning since we have! I have not taken up a paper in which I have not seen a record of two or three accidental deaths; some of them even more bitter and cruel than what has befallen us. I read this morning of a poor washerwoman, whose house was burned, and all her children consumed, while she was away working for her bread. I read the other day of a blind man whose only son was drowned in his very presence, while he could do nothing to help him. I was visiting yesterday that poor dressmaker whom you know. She has by toil and pains been educating a fine and dutiful son. He is smitten down with hopeless disease, while her idiot child, who can do nobody any good, is spared. Ah, this mourning-veil has indeed opened my eyes; but it has taught me to add all the sorrows of the world to my own; and can I believe in God's love?"

"Daughter," said the old man, "I am not ignorant of these things. I have buried seven children; I have buried

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my wife; and God has laid on me in my time reproach, and controversy, and contempt. Each cross seemed, at the time, heavier than the others. Each in its day seemed to be what I least could bear; and I would have cried, 'Anything but this!' And yet, now when I look back, I cannot see one of these sorrows that has not been made a joy to me. With every one some perversity or sin has been subdued, some chain unbound, some good purpose perfected. God has taken my loved ones, but he has given me love. He has given me the power of submission and of consolation; and I have blessed him many times in my ministry for all I have suffered, for by it I have stayed up many that were ready to perish."

"Ah," said Olivia, "you indeed have reason to be comforted, because you can see in yourself the fruit of your sorrows; but I am not improving; I am only crushed and darkened, — not amended."

"Have patience with thyself, child; weeping must endure for a night; all comes not at once. 'No trial for the present seemeth joyous;' but 'afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit;' — have faith in this afterwards. Some one says that it is not in the tempest one walks the beach to look for the treasures of wrecked ships; but when the storm is past we find pearls and precious stones washed ashore. Are there not even now some of these in your path? Is not the love between you and your husband deeper and more intimate since this affliction? Do you not love your other children more tenderly? Did you not tell me that you had thought on the sorrows of every house in this village? Courage, my child! that is a good sign. Once, as you read the papers, you thought nothing of those who lost friends; now you notice and feel. Take the sorrows of others to your heart; they shall widen and deepen it. Ours is a religion of sorrow. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering; our Father is the God

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of all consolation; our Teacher is named the Comforter; and all other mysteries are swallowed up in the mystery of the Divine sorrow. 'In all our afflictions He is afflicted.' God refuseth not to suffer; — shall we?"

There is no grave so desolate that flowers will not at last spring on it. Time passed with Albert and Olivia with healing in its wings. The secret place of tears became first a temple of prayer, and afterwards of praise; and the heavy cloud was remembered by the flowers that sprung up after the rain. The vacant chair in the household circle had grown to be a tender influence, not a harrowing one; and the virtues of the lost one seemed to sow themselves like the scattered seeds of a fallen flower, and to spring up in the hearts of the surviving ones. More tender and more blessed is often the brooding influence of the sacred dead than the words of the living.

Olivia became known in the abodes of sorrow, and a deep power seemed given her to console the suffering and distressed. A deeper power of love sprung up within her; and love, though born of sorrow, ever brings peace with it. Many were the hearts that reposed on her; many the wandering that she reclaimed, the wavering that she upheld, the desolate that she comforted. As a soul in heaven may look back on earth, and smile at its past sorrows, so, even here, it may rise to a sphere where it may look down on the storm that once threatened to overwhelm it.

It was on the afternoon of just such another summer day as we have described at the opening of our story, that Olivia was in her apartment, directing the folding and laying away of mourning-garments. She took up the dark veil and looked on it kindly, as on a faithful friend. How much had she seen and learned behind the refuge of its sheltering folds! She turned her thoughts within herself. She was calm once more, and happy, — happy with a wider and steadier basis than ever before. A new world seemed opened

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within her; and with a heart raised in thankfulness she placed the veil among her most sacred treasures.

Yes, there by the smiling image of the lost one, by the curls of her glossy hair, by the faded flowers taken from her bier, was laid in solemn thankfulness the Mourning-Veil.

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NEW ENGLAND MINISTERS

Dr. Sprague, of Albany, has added to the literature of our country two large octavo volumes, containing biographical accounts of the Congregational clergy of New England, from its earliest settlement until the year 1841. The book has been for the most part compiled from letters furnished by different individuals, who, either through personal knowledge or through tradition, had the most intimate acquaintance with the subjects of which they wrote. The characters here sketched, though perfectly individual, are in so great a degree the result of peculiar political influences, that it would be difficult to suppose their existence elsewhere than in New England. We have therefore chosen this book as a kind of standpoint from which to take a glance at the New England clergy and pulpit. The earliest constitution of government in New England was a theocracy; it was the realization of Arnold's idea of the identity of Church and State. Under it the clergy had peculiar powers and privileges, which, it is but fair to say, they turned to the advantage of the Commonwealth more than has generally been the case with any privileged order.

A time, however, came when the democratic element, which these men themselves had fostered, worked out its logical results, by depriving them of all special immunities, and leaving them, like any other citizens, to make their way by pure force of character, and to be rated, like other men, simply for what they were and what they could do. It is creditable to the intelligence and shrewdness of this body of men that the more far-sighted among them received

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this change with satisfaction; that they were such uncommonly fair logicians as to be willing to accept the direct inference from principles which they had been foremost to inculcate, and, like men of strong mind and clear conscience, were not afraid to rest their claim to influence and deference on the manfulness with which they should strive to deserve them.

Dr. Sprague's book contains pictures of life under both the old régime and the new. The following extract from the venerable Josiah Quincy's recollections of the Rev. Mr. French, of Andover, is interesting, as an illustration of the olden times.

"Mrs. Dowse, my maternal aunt, has often related to me her pride and delight at visiting at the Rev. Mr. Phillips', her paternal grandfather's house, when a child; which was interesting as a statement of the manners of those early times in Massachusetts, before the sceptre of worldly power, which the first settlers of the Colony had placed in the hands of the clergy, had been broken. The period was about between 1760 and the Revolution. The parsonage at Andover was situated about two or three hundred rods from the meeting-house, which was three stories high, of immense dimensions, far greater, I should think, than those of any meeting-houses in these anti-church-going, degenerate times. It was on a hill, slightly elevated above the parsonage, so that all the flock could see the pastor as he issued from it.

"Before the time of service, the congregation gradually assembled in early season, coming on foot or on horseback, the ladies behind their lords or brothers, or one another, on pillions, so that before the time of service the whole space before the meeting-house was filled with a waiting, respectful, and expecting multitude. At the moment of service the pastor issued from his mansion with Bible and manuscript sermon under his arm, with his wife leaning on one

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arm, flanked by his negro man on his side, as his wife was by her negro woman, the little negroes being distributed according to their sex by the side of their respective parents. Then followed every other member of the family according to age and rank, making often, with family visitants, somewhat of a formidable procession. As soon as it appeared the congregation, as if moved by one spirit, began to move towards the door of the church; and before the procession reached it, all were in their places.

"As soon as the pastor entered the church, the whole congregation rose and stood until the pastor was in the pulpit and his family seated, — until which was done the whole assembly continued standing. At the close of the service the congregation stood until he and his family had left the church, before any one moved towards the door.

"Forenoon and afternoon the same course of proceeding was had, expressive of the reverential relation in which the people acknowledged that they stood towards their clergyman.

"Such was the account given me by Mrs. Dowse in relation to times previous to my birth, and which I relate as her narrative, and not as part of my recollections. The procession from the parsonage, the disappearance of the people on the appearance of the procession, and that their pastor was received with every mark of decorum and respect, I well remember, but of their rising at his entrance and standing after the service until he had departed, I have no recollection; my time was almost twenty years after that narrated by Mrs. Dowse. During that period the Revolution had commenced."

Some might think it an advantage, if more of the decorum and reverence of such a state of society had been preserved to our day; for this respect paid to the minister was but part of a general and all-pervading system. Children were more reverential to their parents, scholars to their

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teachers, the people to their magistrates. A want of reverence threatens now to become the besetting sin of America, whether young or old.

The clergy of New England have, as a body, been distinguished for a rare union of the speculative and the practical. In both points they have been so remarkable, that in observing the great development of either of these qualities by itself one would naturally suppose that there was no room for the other.

Generally speaking, they were rural pastors, — living on salaries so small as to afford hardly a nominal support; and in order to bring up their families and give their sons a college education, it was necessary to understand fully the practical *savoir faire*. Accordingly, they farmed and gardened, and often took young people into their families to educate, and in these ways eked out a subsistence. It is related of the venerable Moses Hallock, that he educated in his own family, during his ministerial lifetime, three hundred young people, of whom thirty were females. One hundred and thirty-two of these he fitted for college; fifty became ministers, and six foreign missionaries.

Some of the clergy gained such an acquaintance with the practice of medicine as to be able sometimes to unite the offices of physician of the body and of the soul; and not unfrequently a general knowledge of law enabled the pastor to be the worldly as well as the spiritual counselor of his people. A striking case in point is that of the venerable Parson Eaton, who resided in a lonely seafaring district on the coast of Maine, and preached to a congregation who lived the amphibious life of farmers and fishermen. The town of Harpswell, where he ministered, "is a narrow projection of ten miles southward into Casco Bay, on both sides of which it comprises within its incorporated limits several islands, some of them of considerable size and well inhabited. In his pastoral visits and labors, the clergyman was often

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obliged to ride several miles, and then cross the inlets of the sea, to preach a lecture or to minister comfort or aid to some sick or suffering parishioner. In addition to his clerical duties, Mr. Eaton, having experience and discernment in the more common forms of disease, was generally applied to in sickness; and he usually carried with him a lancet and the more common and simple medicines. If a case was likely to baffle his skill, he advised his patient to send for a regular physician. His admirable sense, moreover, and his education fitted him to render aid and counsel in matters of controversy; so that he often acted as an umpire, and very often to the settling of disputes. Seldom did his people consult a lawyer; and it is even said that, at the time of his death, most of the wills in the town were in his handwriting."

It is a singular thing, that the preaching and the bent of mind of a set of men so intensely practical should have been at the same time intensely speculative. Nowhere in the world, unless perhaps in Scotland, have merely speculative questions excited the strong and engrossing interest among the common people that they have in New England. Every man, woman, and child was more or less a theologian. The minister, while he ground his scythe or sharpened his axe or laid stone fence, was inwardly grinding and hammering on those problems of existence which are as old as man, and which Christian and heathen have alike pondered. The Germans call the whole New England theology rationalistic, in distinction from traditional.

There are minds which are capable of receiving certain series of theological propositions without even an effort at comparison, without a perception of contradiction or inconsequency, without an effort at harmonizing. Such, however, were not the New England ministers. With them predestination *must* be made to harmonize with free will; the Divine entire efficiency with human freedom; the

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existence of sin with the Divine benevolence; — and at it they went with stout hearts, as men work who are not in the habit of being balked in their undertakings. Hence the Edwardses, the Hopkinses, the Emmonses, with all their various schools and followers, who, leviathan-like, have made the theological deep of New England to boil like a pot, and the agitation of whose course remains to this day.

It is a mark of a shallow mind to scorn these theological wrestlings and surgings; they have had in them something even sublime. They were always bounded and steadied by the most profound reverence for God and his word; and they have constituted in New England the strong mental discipline needed by a people who were an absolute democracy. The Sabbath teaching of New England has been a regular intellectual drill as well as a devotional exercise; and if one does not see the advantage of this, let him live awhile in France or Italy, and see the reason why, with all their aspirations after liberty, there is no capability of self-government in the masses; put the tiller of the Campagna, or the vinedresser of France, beside the theologically trained, keen, thoughtful New England farmer, and see which is best fitted to administer a government.

Another leading characteristic of the New England clergy was their great freedom of original development. The volumes before us are full of indications of the most racy individuality. There was no such thing as a clerical mould or pattern; but each minister, particularly in the rural districts, grew and flourished as freely and unconventionally as the apple-trees in his own orchard, and was considered none the worse for that, so long as he bore good fruit of the right sort. Thus we find among them all stamps and kinds of men, — men of decorum and ceremony, like Dr. Emmons and President Edwards, and men who, aiming after the real, despised the form, kept no order, and revered no

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ceremony; yet all flourished in peace, and were allowed to do their work in their own way.

We find here and there records of pleasant little encounters of humor among them on these points. Parson Deane, of Portland, was a precise man, and always appeared in the clerical regalia of the times, with powdered wig, cocked hat, gown, bands. Parson Hemmenway went about with just such clothes as he happened to find convenient, without the least regard to the conventional order.

Being together on a council, Dr. Deane playfully remarked, —

"The ferryman, Brother Hemmenway, as we came over, had n't the least idea you were a clergyman. Now I am particular always to appear with my wig on."

"Precisely," said Dr. Hemmenway; "I know it is well to bestow more abundant honor on the part that lacketh."

It is a curious illustration of the times and people to see how quietly the personal eccentricities of a good minister were received. One Mr. Moody, who flourished in the State of Maine, was one of those born oddities whose growth of mind rejects every outward rule. Brilliant, original, restless, he found it impossible to bring his thoughts to march in the regular platoon and file of a properly written sermon. It is told of him, that, moved by the admiration of his people for the calm and orderly performances of one of his neighboring brethren of the name of Emerson, he resolved to write a sermon in the same style. After the usual introductory services, he began to read his performance, but soon grew weary, stumbled disconsolately, and at last stopped, exclaiming, "Emerson must be Emerson, and Moody must be Moody! I feel as if I had my head in a bag! You call Moody a rambling preacher; — it is true enough; but his preaching will do to catch rambling sinners, and you are all runaways from the Lord."

His clerical brethren at a meeting of the Association once

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undertook to call him to account for his odd expressions and back-handed strokes. He stepped into his study and produced a record of some twenty or thirty cases of conversions which had resulted from some of his exceptional sayings. As he read them over with the dates, they looked at each other with surprise, and one of them very sensibly remarked, "If the Lord owns Father Moody's oddities, we must let him take his own way."

His son, Joseph Moody, furnished the original incident which Hawthorne has so exquisitely worked up in his story of "The Minister's Black Veil." Being of a singularly nervous and melancholic temperament, he actually for many years shrouded his face with a black handkerchief. When reading a sermon he would lift this, but stood with his back to the audience so that his face was concealed, — all which appears to have been accepted by his people with sacred simplicity. He was known in the neighborhood by the name of Handkerchief Moody.

It is recorded also of the venerable and eccentric Father Mills, of Torringford, that, on the death of his much beloved wife, he was greatly exercised as to how a minister who always dressed in black could sufficiently express his devotion and respect for the departed by any outward change of dress. At last he settled the question to his own satisfaction, by substituting for his white wig a black silk pocket-handkerchief, with which head-dress he officiated in all simplicity during the usual term of mourning.

We think it one result of their great freedom from any strait-laced conventional ideas, that no point of character is more frequently noticed in the subjects of these sketches than wit and humor. New England ministers never held it a sin to laugh; if they did, some of them had a great deal to answer for; for they could scarce open their mouths without dropping some provocation to a smile. An ecclesiastical meeting was always a merry season; for there never

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were wanting quaint images, humorous anecdotes, and sharp flashes of wit, and even the driest and most metaphysical points of doctrine were often lit up and illuminated by these coruscations.

A panel taken out of the house of the Rev. John Lowell, of Newbury, is still preserved, representing the common style of an ecclesiastical meeting in those days. The divines, each in full wig and gown, are seated around a table, smoking their pipes, and above is the well-known inscription: *In necessariis, Unitas: in non necessariis, Libertas: in utrisque Charitas.*

In that delightfully naïve and simple journal of the Rev. Thomas Smith, the first minister settled in Portland, Maine, in the year 1725, we find the following entries: —

"July 4, 1763. Mr. Brooks was ordained. A multitude of people from my parish. A decent solemnity."

"January 16, 1765. Mr. Foxcroft was ordained at New Gloucester. We had a pleasant journey home. Mr. L. was alert and kept us all merry. A jolly ordination. We lost sight of decorum."

This Mr. L., by the bye, who was so alert on this occasion, it appears by a note, was Stephen Longfellow, the great-grandfather of the poet. Those who enjoy the poet's acquaintance will probably testify that the property of social alertness has not evaporated from the family in the lapse of so many years.

It is recorded of Dr. Griffin that, when President of the Andover Theological Seminary, he convened the students at his room one evening, and told them he had observed that they were all growing thin and dyspeptical from a neglect of the exercise of Christian laughter, and he insisted upon it that they should go through a company-drill in it then and there. The doctor was an immense man, — over six feet in height, with great amplitude of chest and most magisterial manners. "Here," said he to the first, "you must

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practice; now hear me!" and bursting out into a sonorous laugh, he fairly obliged his pupils, one by one, to join, till the whole were almost convulsed. "That will do for once," said the Doctor, "and now mind you keep in practice!"

New England used to be full of traditions of the odd sayings of Dr. Bellamy, one of the most powerful theologians and preachers of his time. His humor, however, seems to have been wholly a social quality, requiring to be struck out by the collision of conversation; for nothing of the peculiar quaintness and wit ascribed to him appears in his writings, which are in singularly simple, clear English. One or two of his sayings circulated about us in our childhood. For example, when one had built a fire of green wood, he exclaimed, "Warm me here! I'd as soon try to warm me by starlight on the north side of a tombstone!" Speaking of the chapel-bell of Yale College, he said, "It was about as good a bell as a fur cap with a sheep's tail in it."

A young minister, who had made himself conspicuous for a severe and denunciatory style of preaching, came to him one day to inquire why he did not have more success. "Why, man," said the Doctor, "can't you take a lesson of the fisherman? How do you go to work, if you want to catch a trout? You get a little hook and a fine line, you bait it carefully and throw it in as gently as possible, and then you sit and wait and humor your fish till you can get him ashore. Now you get a great cod-hook and rope-line, and thrash it into the water, and bawl out, 'Bite or be damned!'"

The Doctor himself gained such a reputation as an expert spiritual fisherman, that some of his parishioners, like experienced old trout, played shy of his hook, though never so skillfully baited.

"Why, Mr. A.," he said to an old farmer in his neighborhood, "they tell me you are an Atheist. Don't you believe in the being of a God?"

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"No!" said the man.

"But, Mr. A., let's look into this. You believe that the world around us exists from some cause?"

"No, I don't!"

"Well, then, at any rate, you believe in your own existence?"

"No, I don't!"

"What! not believe that you exist yourself?"

"I tell you what, Doctor," said the man, "I ain't going to be twitched up by any of your syllogisms, and so I tell you I don't believe anything, — and I 'm not going to believe anything!"

A collection of the table-talk of the clergy whose lives are sketched in Dr. Sprague's volumes would be a rare fund of humor, shrewdness, genius, and originality. We must say, however, that as nothing is so difficult as to collect these sparkling emanations of conversation, the written record which this work presents falls far below that traditional one which floated about us in our earlier years. So much in wit and humor depends on the electric flash, the relation of the idea to the attendant circumstances, that people often remember only *how* they have laughed, and can no more reproduce the expression than they can daguerreotype the heat-lightning of a July night.

The doctrine that a minister is to maintain some ethereal, unearthly station, where, wrapt in divine contemplation, he is to regard with indifference the actual struggles and realities of life, is a sickly species of sentimentalism, the growth of modern refinement, and altogether too moonshiny to have been comprehended by our stout-hearted and very practical fathers. With all their excellences, they had nothing sentimental about them; they were bent on reducing all things to practical, manageable realities. They would not hear of churches, but called them meeting-houses; they would not be called clergymen, but *ministers* or servants, — thereby

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signifying their calling to real, tangible work among real men and things.

As we have already said, in the beginnings of New England, the Church and State were identical, and the clergy *ex officio* the main counselors and directors of the Commonwealth; and when this especial prerogative was relinquished, they naturally retained something of the bent it had given them.

An interesting portion of these sketches comprises the lives of ministers during our Revolutionary struggle, showing how ardently and manfully at that time the clergy headed the people. Many of them went into the army as chaplains; one or two, more zealous still, even took up temporal arms; while the greater number showered the enemy with sermons, tracts, and pamphlets.

Some of the more zealous politicians among them did not scruple to bring their sentiments even into the prayers of the church. We recollect an anecdote of a stout Whig minister of New Haven, who, during the occupation of the town by the British, was ordered to offer public prayers for the King, which he did as follows: "O Lord, bless thy servant, King George, and grant unto him wisdom; for thou knowest, O Lord, he needs it."

So afterwards, in the time of the Embargo, Parson Eaton, of Harpswell, a Federalist, is recorded to have introduced his prayer for the President in a formula which might be recommended at the present day for the use of the people of Kansas. "Forasmuch as thou hast commanded us to pray for our enemies, we pray for the President of these United States, that his heart may be turned to just counsels," etc.

This same Parson Eaton distinguished himself also for his patriotic enthusiasm in Revolutionary times. When the British had burned Falmouth (Portland) a messenger came to Harpswell to beat up for recruits to the Continental

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forces. Not succeeding to his mind, he went to Parson Eaton, one Sunday morning, and begged him to say something for him in the course of the day's services. "It is my sacramental Sabbath," said the valiant Doctor, "and I cannot. But at the going down of the sun I will speak to my people." And accordingly, that very evening, Bible in hand, on the green before the meeting-house, Dr. Eaton addressed the people, denouncing the curse of Meroz on those who came not up to the help of the country, and recruits flowed in abundantly.

The pastors of New England were always in their sphere moral reformers. Profitable and popular sins, though countenanced by long-established custom, were fearlessly attacked. No sight could be more impressive than that of Dr. Hopkins — who with all his power of mind was never a popular preacher, and who knew he was not popular — rising up in Newport pulpits to testify against the slave trade, then as reputable and profitable a sin as slaveholding is now. He knew that Newport was the stronghold of the practice, and that the probable consequence of his faithfulness would be the loss of his pulpit and of his temporal support; but none the less plainly and faithfully did he testify. Fond as he was of doctrinal subtilties, keen as was his analysis of disinterested benevolence, he did not, like some in our day, confine himself to analyzing virtue in the abstract, but took upon himself the duty of practicing it in the concrete without fear of consequences, — well knowing that there is no logic like that of consistent action.

We should do injustice to our subject, if we did not add a testimony to the peculiarly religious character and influence of the men of whom we speak. Shrewd, practical, capable, as they were, in the affairs of this life, perfectly natural and human as were their characters, still they were in the best sense unworldly men. Religion was the deep underlying stratum on which their whole life was built.

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Like the granite framework of the earth, it sunk below all and rose above all else in their life. No *Acta Sanctorum* contain more pathetic pictures of simple and all-absorbing godliness than were displayed by the subjects of these sketches. However they may have differed among themselves as to the metaphysical adjustment of the Calvinistic system, all agreed in so presenting it as to make God all in all.

Doctor Arnold says it is necessary for the highest development of the soul that it should have somewhere an object of entire reverence enthroned above all possibility of doubt or criticism. Now a radically democratic system, like that of New England, at once sweeps all factitious reliances of this kind from the soul. No crown, no court, no nobility, no ritual, no hierarchy, — the beautiful principles of reverence and loyalty might have died out of the American heart, had not these men by their religious teachings upborne it as on eagles' wings to the footstool of the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible. Hence we see why what was commonly called among them the "Doctrine of Divine Sovereignty" acquired so prominent a place in their preaching and their hearts. They were men of deep reverence and profound loyalty of nature, from whom every lower object for the repose of these qualities had been torn away, — who concentrated on God alone those sentiments of faith and fealty which in other lands are divided with Church and King. Hence, more than that of any other clergy, their preaching contemplated God as King and Ruler. Submission to him without condition, without limit, they both preached and practiced. Unconditional submission was as constantly on their lips God-ward as it was sparingly uttered man-ward.

No picture of the "good parson" that was ever drawn could exceed in beauty that of the Rev. Jeremiah Hallock, whose life and manners had that indescribable beauty, com-

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pleteness, and sacredness, which religion sometimes gives when shining out through a peculiarly congenial natural temperament, — yet we must confess we are as much interested and impressed with its effects in those wilder and more erratic temperaments, such as Bellamy, Backus, and Moody, where genius and passion were so combined as to lead to many inconsistencies. This book is a record of how manfully many such men battled with themselves, repairing the faults of their hasty and passionate hours by the true and honest humility of their better ones, so that, as one has said of our Pilgrim Fathers, we feel that they may have been endeared to God even by their faults.

The pastoral labors of these ministers were abounding. Two and sometimes three services on the Sabbath, and a weekly lecture, were only the beginning of their labors. Multitudes of them held circuit meetings, to the number of two or three a week, in the outskirts of their parishes; besides which they labored conversationally from house to house with individuals.

Gradual, indefinite, insensible amelioration of character was not by any means the only or the highest aim of their preaching. They sought to make religion as definite and as real to men as their daily affairs, and to bring them, as respects their spiritual history, to crises as marked and decided as those to which men are brought in temporal matters. They must become Christians now, to-day; the change must be immediate, all-pervading, thorough.

Such a style of preaching, from men of such power, could not be without corresponding results, especially as it was based always upon strong logical appeals to the understanding. From it resulted, from time to time, periods which are marked in these narratives as revivals of religion, — seasons in which the cumulative force of the instructions and power of the pastor, recognized by that gracious assistance on which he always depended, reached a point of out-

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ward development that affected the whole social atmosphere, and brought him into intimate and confidential knowledge of the spiritual struggles of his flock. The preaching of the pastor was then attuned and modified to these disclosures, and his metaphysical system shaped and adapted to what he perceived to be the real wants and weaknesses of the soul. Hence arose modifications of theology, — often interfering with received theory, just as a judicious physician's clinical practice varies from the book. Many of the theological disputes which have agitated New England have arisen in the honest effort to reconcile accepted forms of faith with the observed phenomena and real needs of the soul in its struggles heavenward.

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BETTY'S BRIGHT IDEA

"When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and GAVE GIFTS unto men." — *Eph.* iv. 8.

"Some say that ever, 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrate,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long.
And then, they say no evil spirit walks;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, no witch hath power to charm, —
So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

AND this holy time, so hallowed and so gracious, was settling down over the great roaring, rattling, seething life-world of New York in the good year 1875. Who does not feel its oncoming in the shops and the streets, in the festive air of trade and business, in the thousand garnitures by which every store hangs out triumphal banners and solicits you to buy something for a Christmas gift? For it is the peculiarity of all this array of prints, confectionery, dry goods, and manufactures of all kinds, that their bravery and splendor at Christmas-tide is all to seduce you into generosity, and importune you to give something to others. It says to you, "The dear God gave you an unspeakable gift; give you a lesser gift to your brother!"

Do we ever think, when we walk those busy, bustling streets, all alive with Christmas shoppers, and mingle with the rushing tides that throng and jostle through the stores, that unseen spirits may be hastening to and fro along those same ways bearing Christ's Christmas gifts to men — gifts whose value no earthly gold or gems can represent?

Yet, on this morning of the day before Christmas, were

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these Shining Ones, moving to and fro with the crowd, whose faces were loving and serene as the invisible stars, whose robes took no defilement from the spatter and the rush of earth, whose coming and going was still as the falling snowflakes. They entered houses without ringing doorbells, they passed through apartments without opening doors, and everywhere they were bearing Christ's Christmas presents, and silently offering them to whoever would open their souls to receive. Like themselves, their gifts were invisible — incapable of weight and measurement in gross earthly scales. To mourners they carried joy; to weary and perplexed hearts, peace; to souls stifling in luxury and self-indulgence they carried that noble discontent that rises to aspiration for higher things. Sometimes they took away an earthly treasure to make room for a heavenly one. They took health, but left resignation and cheerful faith. They took the babe from the dear cradle, but left in its place a heart full of pity for the suffering on earth and a fellowship with the blessed in heaven. Let us follow their footsteps awhile.

SCENE I

A young girl's boudoir in one of our American palaces of luxury, built after the choicest fancy of the architect, and furnished in all the latest devices of household decoration. Pictures, statuettes, and every form of *bijouterie* make the room a miracle of beauty, and the little princess of all sits in an easy-chair before the fire, and thus revolves with herself:

"Oh, dear me! Christmas is a bore! Such a rush and crush in the streets, such a jam in the shops, and then such a fuss thinking up presents for everybody! All for nothing, too; for nobody wants anything, — I'm sure I don't. I 'm surfeited now with pictures and jewelry, and bonbon boxes, and little china dogs and cats — and all these things that

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get so thick you can't move without upsetting some of them. There 's papa, he don't want anything. He never uses any of my Christmas presents when I get them; and mamma, she has every earthly thing I can think of, and said the other day she did hope nobody 'd give her any more worsted work! Then Aunt Maria and Uncle John, they don't want the things I give them; they have more than they know what to do with, now. All the boys say they don't want any more cigar cases or slippers, or smoking-caps. Oh, dear!"

Here the Shining Ones came and stood over the little lady, and looked down on her with faces of pity, which seemed blent with a serene and half-amused indulgence. It was a heavenly amusement, such as that with which mothers listen to the foolish-wise prattle of children just learning to talk. As the grave, sweet eyes rested tenderly on her, the girl somehow grew graver, leaned back in her chair, and sighed a little.

"I wish I knew how to be better!" she said to herself. "I remember last Sunday's text, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' That must mean something! Well, is n't there something, too, in the Bible about not giving to your rich neighbors that can give again, but giving to the poor that cannot recompense you? I don't know any poor people. Papa says there are very few deserving poor people. Well, for the matter of that, there are n't many deserving rich people. I, for example, how much do I deserve to have all these nice things? I'm no better than the poor shop-girls that go trudging by in the cold at six o'clock in the morning — ugh! it makes me shiver to think of it. I know if I had to do that *I* should n't be good at all. Well, I 'd like to give to poor people, if I knew any."

At this moment the door opened and the maid entered.

"Betty, do you know any poor people I ought to get things for, this Christmas?"

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"Poor folks is always plenty, miss," said Betty.

"Oh yes, of course, beggars; but I mean people that I could do something for besides just give cold victuals or money. I don't know where to hunt them up, and should be afraid to go if I did. Oh dear! it 's no use. I 'll give it up."

"Why, Miss Florence, that 'ud be too bad, afther bein' that good in yer heart, to let the poor folks alone for fear of goin' to them. But ye need n't do that, for, now I think of it, there 's John Morley's wife."

"What, the gardener father turned off for drinking?"

"The same, miss. Poor boy, he 's not so bad, and he 's got a wife and two as pretty children as ever you see."

"I always liked John," said the young lady. "But papa is so strict about some things! He says he never will keep a man a day if he finds out that he drinks."

She was quite silent for a minute, and then broke out: —

"I don't care; it 's a good idea! I say, Betty, do you know where John's wife lives?"

"Yes, miss, I 've been there often."

"Well, then, this afternoon I 'll go with you and see if I can do anything for them."

SCENE II

An attic room, neat and clean, but poorly furnished; a bed and a trundle-bed, a small cooking-stove, a shelf with a few dishes, one or two chairs and stools, a pale, thin woman working on a vest. Her face is anxious; her thin hands tremble with weakness, and now and then as she works quiet tears drop, which she wipes quickly. Poor people cannot afford to shed tears; it takes time and injures eyesight. This is John Morley's wife. This morning he has risen and gone out in a desperate mood. "No use to try," he says. "Did n't I go a whole year and never touch a

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drop? And now just because I fell once I 'm kicked out! No use to try. When a fellow once trips, everybody gives him a kick. Talk about love of Christ! Who believes it? Don't see much love of Christ where I go. Your Christians hit a fellow that 's down as hard as anybody. It 's everybody for himself and devil take the hindmost. Well, I 'll trudge up to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and see if they 'll take me on there — if they won't I might as well go to sea, or to the devil," and out he flings.

"Mamma!" says a little voice, "what are we going to have for our Christmas?"

It is a little girl, with soft curly hair and bright, earnest eyes, that speaks. A sturdy little fellow of four presses up to the mother's knee and repeats the question, "Sha'n't we have a Christmas, mother?"

It overcomes the poor woman; she leans forward, and breaks into sobbing, — a tempest of sorrow, long suppressed, that shakes her weak frame as she thinks that her husband is out of work, desperate, discouraged, and tempted of the devil, that the rent is falling due, and only the poor pay of her needle to meet it with. In one of those quick flashes which concentrate through the imagination the sorrows of years, she seems to see her little home broken up, her husband in the gutter, her children turned into the street. At this moment there goes up from her heart a despairing cry, such as a poor, hunted, tired-out creature gives when brought to the last gasp of endurance. It was like the shriek of the hare when the hounds are upon it. She clasps her hands and cries out, "O my God, help me."

There was no voice of any that answered; there was no sound of footfall on the staircase; no one entered the door; and yet that agonized cry had reached the heart it was meant for. The Shining Ones were with her; they stood, with faces full of tenderness, beaming down upon her; they brought her a Christmas gift from Christ — the

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gift of trust. She knew not from whence came the courage and rest that entered her soul; but while her little ones stood wondering and silent, she turned and drew to herself her well-worn Bible. Hands that she did not see guided her as she turned the pages, and pointed to the words: "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight."

She laid down her poor wan cheek on the merciful old book, as on her mother's breast, and gave up all the tangled skein of life into the hands of Infinite Pity. There seemed a consoling presence in the room, and her tired heart found rest. She wiped away her tears, kissed her children, and smiled upon them. Then she rose, gathered up her finished work, and attired herself to go forth and carry it back to the shop.

"Mother," said the children softly, "they are dressing the church, and the gates are open, and people are going in and out; may n't we play there by the church?"

The mother looked out on the ivy-grown walls of the church, with its flocks of twittering sparrows, and said: —

"Yes, my little birds; you may play there if you 'll be very good and quiet."

The mother had only her small, close attic room for her darlings, and to satisfy all their childish desire for variety and motion she had only the refuge of the streets. She was a decent, godly woman, and the bold manners and evil words of street vagrants were terrible to her; and so, when the church gates were open for daily morning and evening prayers, she had often begged the sexton to let her little ones come in and hear the singing, and wander hand in hand around the old church walls. He was a kindly old man, and the children, stealing round like two still, bright-eyed

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little mice, had gained upon his heart, and he made them welcome there. It gave the mother a feeling of protection to have them play near the church, as if it were a father's house.

So she put on their little hoods and tippets, and led them forth, and saw them into the yard; and as she looked to the old gray church, with its rustling ivy bowers and flocks of birds, her heart swelled within her. "Yea, the sparrow hath found a house and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God!" And the Shining Ones walking with her said, "Fear not; ye are of more value than many sparrows."

SCENE III

The little ones went gayly into the yard. They had been scared by their mother's tears; but she had smiled again, and that had made all right with them. The sun was shining brightly, and they were on the sunny side of the old church, and they laughed and chirped and chittered to each other as merrily as the little birds in the ivy boughs.

The old sexton came to the side door and threw out an armful of refuse greens, and then stopped a moment and nodded kindly at them.

"May we play with them, please, sir?" said the little Elsie, looking up with great reverence.

"Oh, yes, to be sure: these are done with — they are no good now."

"Oh, Tottie!" cried Elsie rapturously, "just think, he says we may play with all these. Why, here's ever and ever so much green, enough to play house. Let's play build a house for father and mother."

"I'm going to build a big house for 'em when I grow up," said Tottie, "and I mean to have glass bead windows in it."

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Tottie had once had presented to him a box of colored glass beads to string, and he could think of nothing finer in the future than unlimited glass beads. Meanwhile, his sister began planting pine branches upright in the snow, to make her house.

"You see we can make believe there are windows and doors and a roof," she said, "and it 's just as good. Now, let 's make believe there is a bed in this corner, and we will lie down to sleep."

And Tottie obediently couched himself in the allotted corner and shut his eyes very hard, though after a moment he remarked that the snow got into his neck.

"You must play it is n't snow — play it 's feathers," said Elsie.

"But I don't like it," persisted Tottie, "it don't feel a bit like feathers."

"Oh, well, then," said Elsie, accommodating herself to circumstances, "let 's play get up now and I 'll get breakfast."

Just now the door opened again, and the sexton began sweeping the refuse out of the church. There were bits of ivy and holly, and ruffles of ground-pine, and lots of bright red berries that came flying forth into the yard, and the children screamed for joy. "Oh, Tottie!" "Oh, Elsie!" "Only see how many pretty things — lots and lots!"

The sexton stood and looked and laughed as he saw the little ones so eager for the scraps and remnants.

"Don't you want to come in and see the church?" he said. "It 's all done now, and a brave sight it is. You may come in."

They tripped in softly, with large, bright, wondering eyes. The light through the stained glass windows fell blue and crimson and yellow on the pillars all ruffled with ground-pine and brightened with scarlet bitter-sweet berries, and there were stars and crosses and mottoes in green all through

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the bowery aisles, while the organist, hid in a thicket of verdure, was practicing softly, and sweet voices sung: —

"Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King."

The little ones wandered up and down the long aisles in a dream of awe and wonder. "Hush, Tottie!" said Elsie when he broke into an eager exclamation, "don't make a noise. I do believe it 's something like heaven," she said, under her breath.

They made the course of the church and came round by the door again, where the sexton stood smiling on them.

"You can find lots of pretty Christmas greens out there," he said, pointing to the door; "perhaps your folks would like to have some."

"Oh, thank you, sir," exclaimed Elsie rapturously. "Oh, Tottie, only think! Let 's gather a good lot and go home and dress our room for Christmas. Oh, *won't* mother be astonished when she comes home, we 'll make it so pretty!"

And forthwith the children began gathering into their little aprons wreaths of ground-pine, sprigs of holly, and twigs of crimson bitter-sweet. The sexton, seeing their zeal, brought out to them a little cross, fancifully made of red alder-berries and pine.

Then he said, "A lady took that down to put up a bigger one, and she gave it to me; you may have it if you want it."

"Oh, how beautiful," said Elsie. "How glad I am to have this for mother! When she comes back she won't know our room; it will be as fine as the church."

Soon the little gleaners were toddling off out of the yard — moving masses of green with all that their aprons and their little hands could carry. The sexton looked after them. "Take heed that ye despise not these little ones," he said to himself, "for in heaven their angels" —

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A ray of tenderness fell on the old man's head; it was from the Shining One who watched the children. He thought it was an afternoon sunbeam. His heart grew gentle and peaceful, and his thoughts went far back to a distant green grove where his own little one was sleeping. "Seems to me I've loved all little ones ever since," he said, thinking far back to the Christmas week when his lamb was laid to rest. "Well, she shall not return to me, but I shall go to her." The smile of the Shining One made a warm glow in his heart, which followed him all the way home. The children had a merry time dressing the room. They stuck good big bushes of pine in each window; they put a little ruffle of ground-pine round mother's Bible, and they fastened the beautiful red cross up over the table, and they stuck sprigs of pine or holly into every crack that could be made, by fair means or foul, to accept it; and they were immensely satisfied and delighted. Tottie insisted on hanging up his string of many-colored beads in the window to imitate the effect of the stained glass of the great church window.

"It looks pretty when the light comes through," he remarked; and Elsie admitted that they might play they were painted windows, with some show of propriety. When everything had been stuck somewhere, Elsie swept the floor, and made up a fire, and put on the teakettle, to have everything ready to strike mother favorably on her return.

SCENE IV

A freezing, bright, cold afternoon. "Cold as Christmas!" say cheery voices, as the crowds rush to and fro into shops and stores, and come out with hands full of presents.

"Yes, cold as Christmas," says John Morley. "I should think so! Cold enough for a fellow that can't get in anywhere — that nobody wants and nobody helps! I should think so."

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John had been trudging all day from point to point, only to hear the old story: times were hard, work was dull, nobody wanted him, and he felt morose and surly — out of humor with himself and with everybody else. It is true that his misfortunes were from his own fault; but that consideration never makes a man a particle more patient or good-natured — indeed, it is an additional bitterness in his cup. John was an Englishman. When he first landed in New York from the old country, he had been wild and dissipated and given to drinking. But by his wife's earnest entreaties he had been persuaded to sign the temperance pledge, and had gone on prosperously keeping it for a year. He had a good place and good wages, and all went well with him till in an evil hour he met some of his former boon companions, and was induced to have a social evening with them.

In the first half hour of that evening were lost the fruits of the whole year's self-denial and self-control. He was not only drunk that night, but he went off for a fortnight, and was drunk night after night, and came back to find that his master had discharged him in indignation. John thinks this over bitterly, as he thuds about in the cold, and calls himself a fool. Yet, if the truth must be confessed, John had not much "sense of sin," so called. He looked on himself as an unfortunate and rather ill-used man, for had he not tried very hard to be good, and gone a great while against the stream of evil inclination? and now, just for one yielding, he was pitched out of place, and everybody was turned against him! He thought this was hard measure. Did n't everybody hit wrong sometimes? Did n't rich fellows have their wine, and drink a little too much now and then? Yet nobody was down on them.

"It 's only because I 'm poor," said John. "Poor folks' sins are never pardoned. There 's my good wife — poor girl!" and John's heart felt as if it were breaking, for he was an affectionate creature, and loved his wife and babies,

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and in his deepest consciousness he knew that he was the one at fault. We have heard much about the sufferings of the wives and children of men who are overtaken with drink; but what is not so well understood is the sufferings of the men themselves in their sober moments, when they feel that they are becoming a curse to all that are dearest to them. John's very soul was wrung within him to think of the misery he had brought on his wife and children — the greater miseries that might be in store for them. He was faint of heart; he was tired; he had eaten nothing for hours, and on ahead he saw a drinking-saloon. Why should n't he go and take one good drink, and then pitch off a ferryboat into the East River, and so end the whole miserable muddle of life altogether?

John's steps were turning that way, when one of the Shining Ones, who had watched him all day, came nearer and took his hand. He felt no touch; but at that moment there darted into his soul a thought of his mother, long dead, and he stopped irresolute, then turned to walk another way. The hand that was guiding him led him to turn a corner, and his curiosity was excited by a stream of people who seemed to be pressing into a building. A distant sound of singing was heard as he drew nearer, and soon he found himself passing with the multitude into a great prayer-meeting. The music grew more distinct as he went in. A man was singing in clear, penetrating tones: —

"What means this eager, anxious throng,
Which moves with busy haste along;
These wondrous gatherings day by day;
What means this strange commotion, say?
In accents hushed the throng reply,
'Jesus of Nazareth passeth by!'"

John had but a vague idea of religion, yet something in the singing affected him; and, weary and footsore and heartsore as he was, he sank into a seat and listened with absorbed attention: —

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"Jesus! 't is he who once below
Man's pathway trod in toil and woe;
And burdened ones where'er he came
Brought out their sick and deaf and lame.
The blind rejoiced to hear the cry,
'Jesus of Nazareth passeth by!'

"Ho, all ye heavy-laden, come!
Here 's pardon, comfort, rest, and home.
Ye wanderers from a Father's face,
Return, accept his proffered grace.
Ye tempted ones, there 's refuge nigh —
'Jesus of Nazareth passeth by!'"

A plain man, who spoke the language of plain workingmen, now arose and read from his Bible the words which the angel of old spoke to the shepherds of Bethlehem: —

"Fear not, for behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

The man went on to speak of this with an intense practical earnestness that soon made John feel as if he, individually, were being talked to; and the purport of the speech was this: that God had sent to him, John Morley, a Saviour to save him from his sins, to lift him above his weakness, to help him overcome his bad habits; that His name was called Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins. John listened with a strange new thrill. This was what he needed — a Friend, all-powerful, all-pitiful, who would undertake for him and help him to overcome himself — for he sorely felt how weak he was. Here was a Friend that could have compassion on the ignorant and them that were out of the way. The thought brought tears to his eyes and a glow of hope to his heart. What if He would help him? for deep down in John's heart, worse than cold or hunger or weariness, was the dreadful conviction that he was a doomed man, that he should drink again as he had drunk, and never come to good, but fall lower and lower, and drag all who loved him down with him.

And was this mighty Saviour given to him?

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"Yes," cried the man who was speaking; "to you; to you, who have lost name and place; to you, that nobody cares for; to you, who have been down in the gutter. God has sent you a Saviour to take you up out of the mud and mire, to wash you clean, to give you strength to overcome your sins, and lead you home to his blessed kingdom. This is the glad tidings of great joy that the angels brought on the first Christmas Day. CHRIST was God's Christmas gift to a poor, lost world, and you may have him now, to-day. He may be your own Saviour — yours as much as if there were no other one on earth to be saved. He is looking for you to-day, coming after you, seeking you; He calls you by me. Oh, accept him now!"

There was a deep breathing of suppressed emotion as the speaker sat down, a pause of solemn stillness.

A faint strain of music was heard, and the singer began singing a pathetic ballad of a lost sheep and of the Shepherd going forth to seek it: —

"There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold,
But one was out on the hills away,
Far off from the gates of gold —
Away on the mountains wild and bare,
Away from the tender Shepherd's care.

"'Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine;
Are they not enough for Thee?'
But the Shepherd made answer: This of mine
Has wandered away from me;
And although the road be rough and steep
I go to the desert to find my sheep.'"

John heard with an absorbed interest. All around him were eager listeners, breathless, leaning forward with intense attention. The song went on: —

"But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord went through,
Ere He found His sheep that was lost.
Out in the desert He heard its cry —
Sick and helpless, and ready to die."

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There was a throbbing pathos in the intonation, and the verse floated over the weeping throng; when, after a pause, the strain was taken up triumphantly: —

"But all through the mountains thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
There rose a cry to the gates of heaven,
'Rejoice! I have found my sheep!'
And the angels echoed around the throne,
'Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own!'"

All day long, poor John had felt so lonesome! Nobody cared for him; nobody wanted him; everything was against him; and, worst of all, he had no faith in himself. But here was this Friend, *seeking* him, following him through the cold alleys and crowded streets. In heaven they would be glad to hear that he had become a good man. The thought broke down all his pride, all his bitterness; he wept like a little child; and the Christmas gift of Christ — the sense of a real, present, loving, pitying Saviour — came into his very soul.

He went homeward as one in a dream. He passed the drinking-saloon without a thought or wish of drinking. The expulsive force of a new emotion had for the time driven out all temptation. Raised above weakness, he thought only of this Jesus, this Saviour from sin, who he now believed had followed him and found him, and he longed to go home and tell his wife what great things the Lord had done for him.

SCENE V

Meanwhile a little drama had been acting in John's humble home. His wife had been to the shop that day and come home with the pittance for her work in her hands.

"I'll pay you full price to-day, but we can't pay such prices any longer," the man had said over the counter as he

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paid her. "Hard times — work dull — we are cutting down all our work-folks; you'll have to take a third less next time."

"I'll do my best," she said meekly, as she took her bundle of work and turned wearily away, but the invisible arm of the Shining One was round her, and the words again thrilled through her that she had read that morning: "He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight." She saw no earthly helper; she heard none and felt none, and yet her soul was sustained, and she came home in peace. When she opened the door of her little room she drew back astonished at the sight that presented itself. A brisk fire was roaring in the stove, and the teakettle was sputtering and sending out clouds of steam. A table with a white cloth on it was drawn out before the fire, and a new tea-set of pure white cups and saucers, with teapot, sugar-bowl, and creamer, complete, gave a festive air to the whole. There were bread, and butter, and ham sandwiches, and a Christmas cake all frosted with little blue and red and green candles round it ready to be lighted, and a bunch of hothouse flowers in a pretty little vase in the centre. A new stuffed rocking-chair stood on one side of the stove, and there sat Miss Florence de Witt, our young princess of Scene First, holding little Elsie in her lap, while the broad, honest countenance of Betty was beaming with kindness down on the delighted face of Tottie. Both children were dressed from head to foot in complete new suits of clothes, and Elsie was holding with tender devotion a fine doll, while Tottie rejoiced in a horse and cart which he was manœuvring under Betty's superintendence.

The little princess had pleased herself in getting up all this tableau. Doing good was a novelty to her, and she plunged into it with the zest of a new amusement. The amazed look of the poor woman, her dazed expressions of

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rapture and incredulous joy, the shrieks and cries of confused delight with which the little ones met their mother, delighted her more than any scene she had ever witnessed at the opera — with this added grace, unknown to her, that at this scene the invisible Shining Ones were pleased witnesses. She had been out with Betty, buying here and there whatever was wanted, — and what was not wanted for those who had been living so long without work or money? She had their little coal-bin filled, and a nice pile of wood and kindlings put behind the stove. She had bought a nice rocking-chair for the mother to rest in. She had dressed the children from head to foot at a ready-made clothing store, and bought them toys to their heart's desire, while Betty had set the table for a Christmas feast.

And now she said to the poor woman at last: —

"I 'm so sorry John lost his place at father's. He was so kind and obliging, and I always liked him; and I 've been thinking, if you 'd get him to sign the pledge over again from Christmas Eve, never to touch another drop, I 'll get papa to take him back. I always do get papa to do what I want, and the fact is, he has n't got anybody that suited him so well since John left. So you tell John that I mean to go surety for him; he certainly won't fail me. Tell him I trust him." And Miss Florence pulled out a paper wherein, in her best round hand, she had written out again the temperance pledge, and dated it "*Christmas Eve*, 1875."

"Now, you come with John to-morrow morning, and bring this with his name to it, and you 'll see what I 'll do!" and, with a kiss to the children, the little good fairy departed, leaving the family to their Christmas Eve.

What that Christmas Eve was when the husband and father came home with the new and softened heart that had been given him, who can say? There were joyful tears and solemn prayers, and earnest vows and purposes

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of a new life heard by the Shining Ones in the room that night.

"And the angels echoed around the throne,
Rejoice! for the Lord brings back his own."

SCENE VI

"Now, papa, I want you to give me something special to-day, because it 's Christmas," said the little princess to her father, as she kissed and wished him "Merry Christmas" next morning.

"What is it, Pussy — half of my kingdom?"

"No, no, papa; not so much as that. It 's a little bit of my own way that I want."

"Of course; well, what is it?"

"Well, I want you to take John back again."

Her father's face grew hard.

"Now, please, papa, don't say a word till you have heard me. John was a capital gardener; he kept the greenhouse looking beautiful; and this Mike that we 've got now, he 's nothing but an apprentice, and stupid as an owl at that! He 'll never do in the world."

"All that is very true," said Mr. de Witt, "but John drinks, and I won't have a drinking man."

"But, papa, I mean to take care of that. I 've written out the temperance pledge, and dated it, and got John to sign it, and here it is," and she handed the paper to her father, who read it carefully, and sat turning it in his hands while his daughter went on: —

"You ought to have seen how poor, how very poor they were. His wife is such a nice, quiet, hard-working woman, and has two such pretty children. I went to see them and carry them Christmas things yesterday, but it 's no good doing anything if John can't get work. She told me how the poor fellow had been walking the streets in the cold,

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day after day, trying everywhere, and nobody would take him. It's a dreadful time now for a man to be out of work, and it is n't fair his poor wife and children should suffer. Do try him again, papa!"

"John always did better with the pineapples than anybody we have tried," said Mrs. De Witt at this point. "He is the only one who really understands pineapples."

At this moment the door opened, and there was a sound of chirping voices in the hall. "Please, Miss Florence," said Betty, "the little folks says they wants to give you a Christmas." She added in a whisper: "They thinks much of giving you something, poor little things — plaze take it of 'em." And little Tottie at the word marched in and offered the young princess his dear, beautiful, beloved string of glass beads, and Elsie presented the cross of red berries — most dear to her heart and fair to her eyes. "We wanted to give you something," she said bashfully.

"Oh, you lovely dears!" cried Florence; "how sweet of you! I shall keep these beautiful glass beads always, and put the cross up over my dressing-table. I thank you ever so much!"

"Are those John's children?" asked Mr. de Witt, winking a tear out of his eye — he was at bottom a soft-hearted old gentleman.

"Yes, papa," said Florence, caressing Elsie's curly hair, — "see how sweet they are!"

"Well — you may tell John I 'll try him again."

And so passed Florence's Christmas, with a new, warm sense of joy in her heart, a feeling of something in the world to be done, worth doing.

"How much joy one can give with a little money!" she said to herself as she counted over what she had spent on her Christmas. Ah yes! and how true that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." A shining, invisible hand was laid on her head in blessing as she lay down that night,

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and a sweet sense of a loving presence stole like music into her soul. Unknown to herself, she had that day taken the first step out of self-life into that life of love and care for others which brought the King of Glory down to share earth's toils and sorrows. And that precious experience was Christ's Christmas gift to her.

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DEACON PITKIN'S FARM

CHAPTER I

MISS DIANA

THANKSGIVING was impending in the village of Mapleton on the 20th of November, 1825. The Governor's proclamation had been duly and truly read from the pulpit the Sunday before, to the great consternation of Miss Briskett, the ambulatory dressmaker, who declared confidentially to Deacon Pitkin's wife that "she didn't see nothin' how she was goin' to get through things — and there was Saphiry's gown, and Mis' Deacon Trowbridge's cloak, and Lizy Jane's new merino, not a stroke done on't. The Governor ought to be ashamed of himself for hurrying matters so."

It was a very rash step for Miss Briskett to go to the length of such a remark about the Governor, but the deacon's wife was one of the few women who are nonconductors of indiscretion, and so the Governor never heard of it. This particular Thanksgiving-tide was marked in Mapleton by exceptionally charming weather. Once in a great while the inclement New England skies are taken with a remorseful twinge and forget to give their usual snap of September frost which generally bites off all the pretty flowers in so heartbreaking a way, and then you can have lovely times quite down through November.

It was so this year at Mapleton. Though the Thanksgiving proclamation had been read, and it was past the middle of November, yet marigolds and four-o'clocks were all ablaze in the gardens, and the goldenrod and purple

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aster were blooming over the fields as if they were expecting to keep it up all winter. It really is affecting, the jolly good heart with which these bright children of the rainbow flaunt and wave and dance and go on budding and blossoming in the very teeth and snarl of oncoming winter. An autumn goldenrod or aster ought to be the symbol for pluck and courage, and might serve a New England crest as the broom flower did the old Plantagenets. The trees round Mapleton were looking like gigantic tulip beds, and breaking every hour into new phantasmagoria of color; and the great elm that overshadowed the red Pitkin farmhouse seemed like a dome of gold, and sent a yellow radiance through all the doors and windows as the dreamy autumn sunshine streamed through it. The Pitkin elm was noted among the great trees of New England. Now and then Nature asserts herself and does something so astonishing and overpowering as actually to strike through the crust of human stupidity, and convince mankind that a tree is something greater than they are. As a general thing the human race has a stupid hatred of trees. They embrace every chance to cut them down. They have no idea of their fitness for anything but firewood or fruit-bearing. But a great cathedral elm, with shadowy aisles of boughs, its choir of whispering winds and chanting birds, its hush and solemnity and majestic grandeur, actually conquers the dull human race and asserts its leave to be in a manner to which all hearts respond; and so the great elms of New England have got to be regarded with a sort of pride as among her very few crown jewels, and the Pitkin elm was one of these.

But was n't it a busy time in Mapleton! Busy is no word for it. Oh, the choppings, the poundings, the stoning of raisins, the projections of pies and puddings, the killing of turkeys — who can utter it? The very chip squirrels in the stone walls, who have a family custom of making a market-basket of their mouths, were rushing about with

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chops incredibly distended, and their tails had an extra whisk of thanksgiving alertness. A squirrel's Thanksgiving dinner is an affair of moment, mind you. In the great, roomy, clean kitchen of the deacon's house might be seen the lithe, comely form of Diana Pitkin presiding over the roaring great oven which was to engulf the armies of pies and cakes which were in due course of preparation on the ample tables. Of course you want to know who Diana Pitkin was. It was a general fact about this young lady that anybody who gave one look at her, whether at church or at home, always inquired at once with effusion, "Who is she?" — particularly if the inquirer was one of the masculine gender. This was to be accounted for by the fact that Miss Diana presented to the first view of the gazer a dazzling combination of pink and white, a flashing pair of black eyes, a ripple of dimples about the prettiest little rosy mouth in the world, and a frequent somewhat saucy laugh, which showed a set of teeth like pearls. Add to this a quick wit, a generous though spicy temper, and a nimble tongue, and you will not wonder that Miss Diana was a marked character at Mapleton, and that the inquiry who she was was one of the most interesting facts of statistical information.

Well, she was Deacon Pitkin's second cousin, and of course just in that convenient relationship to the Pitkin boys which has all the advantages of cousinship and none of the disadvantages, as may be plain to an ordinary observer. For if Miss Diana wished to ride or row or dance with any of the Pitkin boys, why should n't she? Were they not her cousins? But if any of these aforenamed young fellows advanced on the strength of these intimacies a presumptive claim to nearer relationship, why, then Diana was astonished — of course she had regarded them as her cousins! and she was sure she could n't think what they could be dreaming of — "A cousin is just like a brother, you know."

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This was just what James Pitkin did not believe in, and now as he is walking over hill and dale from Cambridge College to his father's house he is gathering up a decided resolution to tell Diana that he is not and will not be to her as a brother — that she must be to him all or nothing. James is the brightest, the tallest, and, the Mapleton girls said, the handsomest of the Pitkin boys. He is a strong-hearted, generous, resolute fellow as ever undertook to walk thirty-five miles home to eat his Thanksgiving dinner. We are not sure that Miss Diana is not thinking of him quite as much as he of her, as she stands there with the long kitchen shovel in one hand, and one plump white arm thrust into the oven, and her little head cocked on one side, her brows bent, and her rosy mouth pursed up with a solemn sense of the importance of her judgment as she is testing the heat of her oven. Oh, Di, Di! for all you seem to have nothing on your mind but the responsibility for all those pumpkin pies and cranberry tarts, we would n't venture a very large wager that you are not thinking about cousin James under it all at this very minute, and that all this pretty bustling housewifeliness owes its spice and flavor to the thought that James is coming to the Thanksgiving dinner. To be sure if any one had told Di so, she would have flouted the very idea. Besides, she had privately informed Almira Sisson, her special particular confidante, that she knew Jim would come home from college full of conceit, and thinking that everybody must bow down to him, and for her part she meant to make him know his place. Of course Jim and she were good friends, etc., etc.

Oh, Di, Di! you silly, naughty girl, was it for this that you stood so long at your looking-glass last night, arranging how you would do your hair for the Thanksgiving night dance? Those killing bows which you deliberately fabricated and lodged like bright butterflies among the dark waves of your hair — who were you thinking of as you made and

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posed them? Lay your hand on your heart and say who to you has ever seemed the best, the truest, the bravest and kindest of your friends. But Di doesn't trouble herself with such thoughts — she only cuts out saucy mottoes from the flaky white paste to lay on the red cranberry tarts, of which she makes a special one for each cousin. For there is Bill, the second eldest, who stays at home and helps work the farm. She knows that Bill worships her very shoe-tie, and obeys all her mandates with the faithful docility of a good Newfoundland dog, and Di says "she thinks everything of Bill — she likes Bill." So she does Ed, who comes a year or two behind Bill, and is trembling out of bashful boyhood. So she does Rob and Ike and Pete and the whole healthy, ramping train who fill the Pitkin farmhouse with a racket of boots and boys. So she has made every one a tart with his initial on it and a saucy motto or two, "just to keep them from being conceited, you know."

All day she keeps busy by the side of the deacon's wife, — a delicate, thin, quiet little woman, with great thoughtful eyes and a step like a snowflake. New England had of old times, and has still, perhaps, in her farmhouses, these women, who seem from year to year to develop in the spiritual sphere as the bodily form shrinks and fades. While the cheek grows thin and the form spare, the will power grows daily stronger; though the outer man perish, the inner man is renewed day by day. The worn hand that seems so weak yet holds every thread and controls every movement of the most complex family life, and wonders are daily accomplished by the presence of a woman who seems little more than a spirit. The New England wife-mother was the one little jeweled pivot on which all the wheel work of the family moved.

"Well, have n't we done a good day's work, cousin?" says Diana, when ninety pies of every ilk — quince, apple, cranberry, pumpkin, and mince — have been all safely de-

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livered from the oven and carried up into the great vacant chamber, where, ranged in rows and frozen solid, they are to last over New Year's Day! She adds, demonstratively clasping the little woman round the neck, and leaning her bright cheek against her whitening hair, "Have n't we been smart?" And the calm, thoughtful eyes turn lovingly upon her as Mary Pitkin puts her arm round her and answers: —

"Yes, my daughter, you have done wonderfully. We could n't do without you!"

And Diana lifts her head and laughs. She likes petting and praising as a cat likes being stroked; but, for all that, the little puss has her claws and a sly notion of using them.

CHAPTER II

BIAH CARTER

It was in the flush and glow of a gorgeous sunset that you might have seen the dark form of the Pitkin farmhouse rising on a green hill against the orange sky. The red house, with its overhanging canopy of elm, stood out like an old missal picture done on a gold ground. Through the glimmer of the yellow twilight might be seen the stacks of dry cornstalks and heaps of golden pumpkins in the neighboring fields, from which the slow oxen were bringing home a cart well laden with farm produce.

It was the hour before supper time, and Biah Carter, the deacon's hired man, was leaning against a fence, waiting for his evening meal; indulging the while in a stream of conversational wisdom which seemed to flow all the more freely from having been dammed up through the labors of the day.

Biah was, in those far distant times of simplicity, a "mute inglorious" newspaper man. Newspapers in those days were

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as rare and unheard of as steam cars or the telegraph, but Biah had within him all the making of a thriving modern reporter, and no paper to use it on. He was a walking biographical and statistical dictionary of all the affairs of the good folks of Mapleton. He knew every piece of furniture in their houses, and what they gave for it; every foot of land, and what it was worth; every ox, ass, and sheep; every man, woman, and child in town. And Biah could give pretty shrewd character pictures also, and whoever wanted to inform himself of the status of any person or thing in Mapleton would have done well to have turned the faucet of Biah's stream of talk, and watched it respectfully as it came, for it was commonly conceded that what Biah Carter did n't know about Mapleton was hardly worth knowing.

"Putty piece o' property, this 'ere farm," he said, surveying the scene around him with the air of a connoisseur. "None o' yer stun pastur land where the sheep can't get their noses down through the rocks without a file to sharpen 'em! Deacon Pitkin did a putty fair stroke o' business when he swapped off his old place for this 'ere. That 'ere old place was all swamp land and stun pastur; wa'n't good for raisin' nothin' but juniper bushes and bullfrogs. But I tell *yeu*," proceeded Biah, with a shrewd wink, "that 'ere mortgage pinches the deacon; works him like a dose of aloes and picry, it does. Deacon fairly gets lean on't."

"Why," said Abner Jenks, a stolid plough-boy to whom this stream of remark was addressed; "this 'ere place ain't mortgaged, is it? Du tell, naow!"

"Why, yis; don't ye know that 'ere? Why, there 's risin' two thousand dollars due on this 'ere farm, and if the deacon don't scratch for it and pay up squar to the minit, old Squire Norcross 'll foreclose on him. Old squire hain't no bowels, I tell yeu, and the deacon knows he hain't: and I tell yeu it keeps the deacon dancin' lively as corn on a hot shovel."

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"The deacon 's a master hand to work," said Abner; "so 's the boys."

"Wal, yis, the deacon is," said Biah, turning contemplatively to the farmhouse; "there ain't a crittur in that 'ere house that there ain't the most work got out of 'em that ken be, down to Jed and Sam, the little uns. They work like tigers, every soul of 'em, from four o'clock in the mornin' as long as they can see, and Mis' Pitkin she works all the evening — woman's work ain't never done, they say."

"She 's a good woman, Mis' Pitkin is," said Abner, "and she 's a smart worker."

In this phrase Abner solemnly expressed his highest ideal of a human being.

"Smart ain't no word for 't," said Biah, with alertness. "Declar for 't, the grit o' that 'ere woman beats me. Had eight children right along in a string 'thout stoppin', done all her own work, never kep' no gal nor nothin'; allers up and dressed; allers to meetin' Sunday, and to the prayer-meetin' weekly, and never stops workin': when 't ain't one thing it 's another — cookin', washin', ironin', making butter and cheese, and 'tween spells cuttin' and sewin', and if she ain't doin' that, why, she 's braidin' straw to sell to the store or knitting,— she 's the perpetual motion ready found, Mis' Pitkin is."

"Want ter know," said the auditor, as a sort of musical rest in this monotone of talk. "Ain't she smart, though!"

"Smart! Well, I should think she was. She 's over and into everything that 's goin' on in that house. The deacon would n't know himself without her; nor would n't none of them boys, they just live out of her; she kind o' keeps 'em all up."

"Wal, she ain't a hefty woman, naow," said the interlocutor, who seemed to be possessed by a dim idea that worth must be weighed by the pound.

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"Law bless you, no! She 's a little crittur; nothin' to look to, but every bit in her is live. She looks pale, kind o' slips round still like moonshine, but where anything 's to be done, there Mis' Pitkin is; and her hand allers goes to the right spot, and things is done afore ye know it. That 'ere woman 's kind o' still; she 'll slip off and be gone to heaven some day afore folks know it. There comes the deacon and Jim over the hill. Jim walked home from college day 'fore yesterday, and turned right in to-day to help get in the taters, workin' right along. Deacon was awful grouty."

"What was the matter o' the deacon?"

"Oh, the mortgage kind o' works him. The time to pay comes round putty soon, and the deacon's face allers goes down long as yer arm. 'T is a putty tight pull havin' Jim in college, losin' his work and havin' term bills and things to pay. Them 'ere college folks charges up, I tell you. I seen it works the deacon, I heard him a-jawin' Jim 'bout it."

"What made Jim go to college?" said Abner with slow wonder in his heavy face.

"Oh, he allers was sot on eddication, and Mis' Pitkin she 's sot on't, too, in her softly way, and softly women is them that giner'lly carries their p'ints, fust or last.

"But there 's one that ain't softly!" Biah suddenly continued, as the vision of a black-haired, bright-eyed girl suddenly stepped forth from the doorway, and stood shading her face with her hands, looking towards the sunset. The evening light lit up a jaunty spray of goldenrod that she had wreathed in her wavy hair, and gave a glow to the rounded outlines of her handsome form. "There 's a sparkler for you! And no saint, neither!" was Biah's comment. "That crittur has got more prances and capers in her than any three-year-old filly I knows on. He 'll be cunning that ever gets a bridle on her."

"Some says she 's going to hev Jim Pitkin, and some

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says it 's Bill," said Abner, delighted to be able to add his mite of gossip to the stream while it was flowing.

"She 's sweet on Jim while he 's round, and she 's sweet on Bill when Jim 's up to college, and between um she gets took round to everything that 's going. She gives one a word over one shoulder, and one over t'other, and if the Lord above knows what 's in that gal's mind or what she 's up to, he knows more than I do, or she either, else I lose my bet."

Biah made this admission with a firmness that might have been a model to theologians or philosophers in general. There was a point, it appeared, where he was not omniscient. His universal statistical knowledge had a limit.

CHAPTER III

THE SHADOW

There is no moment of life, however festive, that does not involve the near presence of a possible tragedy. When the concert of life is playing the gayest and airiest music, it requires only the change of a little flat or sharp to modulate into the minor key. There seemed at first glance only the elements of joyousness and gayety in the surroundings at the Pitkin farm. Thanksgiving was come, — the family, healthy, rosy, and noisy, were all under the one roof-tree. There was energy, youth, intelligence, beauty, a pair of lovers on the eve of betrothal, — just in that misty, golden twilight that precedes the full sunrise of avowed and accepted love, — and yet behind it all was walking with stealthy step the shadow of a coming sorrow.

"What in the world ails James?" said Diana, as she retreated from the door and surveyed him at a distance from her chamber window. His face was like a landscape over which a thundercloud has drifted, and he walked

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beside his father with a peculiar air of proud displeasure and repression. At that moment the young man was struggling with the bitterest sorrow that can befall youth, — the breaking up of his life-purpose. He had just come to a decision to sacrifice his hopes of education, his man's ambition, his love, his home and family, and become a wanderer on the face of the earth. How this befell requires a sketch of character.

Deacon Silas Pitkin was a fair specimen of a class of men not uncommon in New England, — men too sensitive for the severe physical conditions of New England life, and therefore both suffering and inflicting suffering. He was a man of the finest moral traits, of incorruptible probity, of scrupulous honor, of an exacting conscientiousness, and of a sincere piety. But he had begun life with nothing; his whole standing in the world had been gained inch by inch by the most unremitting economy and self-denial, and he was a man of little capacity for hope, of whom it was said, in popular phraseology, that he "took things hard." He was never sanguine of good, always expectant of evil, and seemed to view life like a sentinel forbidden to sleep and constantly under arms. For such a man to be harassed by a mortgage upon his homestead was a steady wear and drain upon his vitality. There were times when a positive horror of darkness came down upon him, — when his wife's untroubled, patient hopefulness seemed to him like recklessness, when the smallest item of expense was an intolerable burden, and the very daily bread of life was full of bitterness; and when these paroxysms were upon him, one of the heaviest of his burdens was the support of his son in college. It was true that he was proud of his son's talents and sympathized with his love for learning, — he had to the full that sense of the value of education which is the very vital force of the New England mind, — and in an hour when things looked brighter to him he had given his con-

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sent to the scheme of a college education freely. James was industrious, frugal, energetic, and had engaged to pay the most of his own expenses by teaching in the long winter vacations. But unfortunately this year the Mapleton Academy, which had been promised to him for the winter term, had been taken away by a little manœuvre of local politics and given to another, thus leaving him without resource. This disappointment, coming just at the time when the yearly interest upon the mortgage was due, had brought upon his father one of those paroxysms of helpless gloom and discouragement in which the very world itself seemed clothed in sackcloth.

From the time that he heard the Academy was gone, Deacon Silas lay awake nights in the blackness of darkness. "We shall all go to the poorhouse together, — that's where it will end," he said, as he tossed restlessly in the dark.

"Oh, no, no, my dear," said his wife, with those serene eyes that had looked through so many gloomy hours; "we must cast our care on God."

"It's easy for women to talk. You don't have the interest money to pay, you are perfectly reckless of expense. Nothing would do but James must go to college, and now see what it's bringing us to!"

"Why, father, I thought you yourself were in favor of it."

"Well, I did wrong then. You persuaded me into it. I'd no business to have listened to you and Jim and got all this load on my shoulders."

Yet Mary Pitkin knew in her own calm, clear head that she had not been reckless of expense. The yearly interest money was ever before her, and her own incessant toils had wrought no small portion of what was needed to pay it. Her butter at the store commanded the very highest price, her straw braiding sold for a little more than that of any

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other hand, and she had calculated all the returns so exactly that she felt sure that the interest money for that year was safe. She had seen her husband pass through this nervous crisis many times before, and she had learned to be blamed in silence, for she was a woman out of whom all selfness had long since died, leaving only the tender pity of the nurse and the consoler. Her soul rested on her Saviour, the one ever-present, inseparable friend; and when it did no good to speak to her husband, she spoke to her God for him, and so was peaceful and peace-giving.

Even her husband himself felt her strengthening, rest-giving power, and for this reason he bore down on her with the burden of all his tremors and his cares; for while he disputed, he yet believed her, and rested upon her with an utter helpless trust, as the good angel of his house. Had she for a moment given way to apprehension, had her step been a thought less firm, her eye less peaceful, then, indeed, the world itself would have seemed to be sinking under his feet. Meanwhile she was to him that kind of relief which we derive from a person to whom we may say everything without a fear of its harming them. He felt quite sure that, say what he would, Mary would always be hopeful and courageous; and he felt some secret idea that his own gloomy forebodings were of service in restricting and sobering what seemed to him her too sanguine nature. He blindly reverenced, without ability fully to comprehend, her exalted religious fervor and the quietude of soul that it brought. But he did not know through how many silent conflicts, how many prayers, how many tears, how many hopes resigned and sorrows welcomed, she had come into that last refuge of sorrowful souls, that immovable peace when all life's anguish ceases and the will of God becomes the final rest.

But unhappily for this present crisis, there was, as there often is in family life, just enough of the father's nature in the son to bring them into collision with each other. James

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had the same nervously anxious nature, the same intense feeling of responsibility, the same tendency towards morbid earnestness; and on that day there had come collision. His father had poured forth upon him his fears and apprehensions in a manner which implied a censure on his son, as being willing to accept a life of scholarly ease while his father and mother were, as he expressed it, "working their lives away."

"But I tell you, father, as God is my witness, I mean to pay all; you shall not suffer; interest and principal — all that my work would bring — I engage to pay back."

"You! — you 'll never have anything! You 'll be a poor man as long as you live. Lost the Academy this fall — that tells the story!"

"But, father, it was n't my fault that I lost the Academy."

"It 's no matter whose fault it was — that 's neither here nor there — you lost it, and here you are with the vacation before you and nothing to do! There 's your mother, she 's working herself to death; she never gets any rest. I expect she 'll go off in a consumption one of these days."

"There, there, father! that 's enough! Please don't say any more. You 'll see I will find something to do!"

There are words spoken at times in life that do not sound bitter though they come from a pitiable depth of anguish, and as James turned from his father he had taken a resolution that convulsed him with pain; his strong arms quivered with the repressed agony, and he hastily sought a distant part of the field, and began cutting and stacking cornstalks with a nervous energy.

"Why, ye work like thunder!" was Biah's comment. "Book-l'arnin' hain't spiled ye yet; your arms are good for suthin'."

"Yes, my arms are good for something, and I 'll use them for something," said Jim.

There was raging a tempest in his soul. For a young

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fellow of a Puritan education in those days to be angry with his father was somewhat that seemed to him as awful a sacrilege as to be angry with his God, and yet he felt that his father had been bitterly, cruelly unjust towards him. He had driven economy to the most stringent extremes; he had avoided the intimacy of his class fellows, lest he should be drawn into needless expenses; he had borne with shabby clothing and mean fare among better dressed and richer associates, and been willing to bear it. He had studied faithfully, unremittingly, for two years, but at the moment he turned from his father the throb that wrung his heart was the giving up of all.

He had in his pocket a letter from his townsman and schoolmate, Sam Allen, mate of an East Indiaman just fitting out at Salem, and it said: —

"We are going to sail with a picked crew, and we want one just such a fellow as you for third mate. Come along, and you can go right up, and your college mathematics will be all the better for us. Come right off, and your berth will be ready, and away for round the world!"

Here, to be sure, was immediate position — wages — employment — freedom from the intolerable burden of dependence; but it was accepted at the sacrifice of all his life's hopes. True, that in those days the experiment of a seafaring life had often, even in instances which he recalled, brought forth fortune and an ability to settle down in peaceful competence in after life. But there was Diana. Would she wait for him? Encircled on all sides with lovers, would she keep faith with an adventurer gone for an indefinite quest? The desponding, self-distrusting side of his nature said, "No. Why should she?" Then, to go was to give up Diana — to make up his mind to have her belong to some other. Then there was his mother. An unutterable reverential pathos always to him encircled the idea of his mother. Her life to him seemed a hard one. From the

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outside, as he viewed it, it was all self-sacrifice and renunciation. Yet he knew that she had set her heart on an education for him, as much as it could be set on anything earthly. He was her pride, her hope; and just now that very thought was full of bitterness. There was no help for it; he must not let her work herself to death for him; he would make the household vessel lighter by the throwing himself into the sea, to sink or swim as might happen; and then, perhaps, he might come back with money to help them all.

All this was what was surging and boiling in his mind when he came in from his work to the supper that night.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOOD-BY

Diana Pitkin was like some of the fruits of her native hills, full of juices which tend to sweetness in maturity, but which when not quite ripe have a pretty decided dash of sharpness. There are grapes that require a frost to ripen them, and Diana was somewhat akin to these.

She was a mettlesome, warm-blooded creature, full of the energy and audacity of youth, to whom as yet life was only a frolic and a play spell. Work never tired her. She ate heartily, slept peacefully, went to bed laughing, and got up in a merry humor in the morning. Diana's laugh was as early a note as the song of birds. Such a nature is not at first sympathetic. It has in it some of the unconscious cruelty which belongs to nature itself, whose sunshine never pales at human trouble. Eyes that have never wept cannot comprehend sorrow. Moreover, a lively girl of eighteen, looking at life out of eyes which bewilder others with their brightness, does not always see the world truly, and is sometimes judged to be heartless when she is only immature.

Nothing was further from Diana's thoughts than that any

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grave trouble was overhanging her lover's mind — for her lover she very well knew that James was, and she had arranged beforehand to herself very pretty little comedies of life to be duly enacted in the long vacation, in which James was to appear as the suitor, and she, not too soon nor with too much eagerness, was at last to acknowledge to him how much he was to her. But meanwhile he was not to be too presumptuous. It was not set down in the cards that she should be too gracious or make his way too easy. When, therefore, he brushed by her hastily, on entering the house, with a flushed cheek and frowning brow, and gave no glance of admiration at the pretty toilet she had found time to make, she was slightly indignant. She was as ignorant of the pang which went like an arrow through his heart at the sight of her as the bobolink which whirs and chitters and tweedles over a grave.

She turned away and commenced a kitten-like frolic with Bill, who was always only too happy to second any of her motions, and readily promised that after supper she would go with him a walk of half a mile over to a neighbor's, where was a corn-husking. A great golden lamp of a harvest moon was already coming up in the fading flush of the evening sky, and she promised herself much amusement in watching the result of her manœuvre on James.

"He 'll see at any rate that I am not waiting his beck and call. Next time if he wants my company he can ask for it in season. I 'm not going to indulge him in sulks, not I. These college fellows worry over books till they hurt their digestion, and then have the blues and look as if the world was coming to an end." And Diana went to the looking-glass and rearranged the spray of goldenrod in her hair and nodded at herself defiantly, and then turned to help get on the supper.

The Pitkin folk that night sat down to an ample feast, over which the impending Thanksgiving shed its hilarity.

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There was not only the inevitable great pewter platter, scoured to silver brightness, in the centre of the table, and piled with solid masses of boiled beef, pork, cabbage and all sorts of vegetables, and the equally inevitable smoking loaf of rye and Indian bread, to accompany the pot of baked pork and beans, but there were specimens of all the newly made Thanksgiving pies filling every available space on the table. Diana set special value on herself as a pie artist, and she had taxed her ingenuity this year to invent new varieties, which were received with bursts of applause by the boys. These sat down to the table in democratic equality, — Biah Carter and Abner with all the sons of the family, old and young, each eager, hungry and noisy; and over all, with moonlight calmness and steadiness, Mary Pitkin ruled and presided, dispensing to each his portion in due season, while Diana, restless and mischievous as a sprite, seemed to be possessed with an elfin spirit of drollery, venting itself in sundry little tricks and antics which drew ready laughs from the boys and reproving glances from the deacon. For the deacon was that night in one of his severest humors. As Biah Carter afterwards remarked of that night, "You could feel there was thunder in the air somewhere round. The deacon had got on about his longest face, and when the deacon's face is about down to its wust, why, it would stop a robin singin' — there could n't nothin' stan' it."

To-night the severely cut lines of his face had even more than usual of haggard sternness, and the handsome features of James beside him, in their fixed gravity, presented that singular likeness which often comes out between father and son in seasons of mental emotion. Diana in vain sought to draw a laugh from her cousin. In pouring his home-brewed beer she contrived to spatter him, but he wiped it off without a smile, and let pass in silence some arrows of raillery that she had directed at his sombre face. When they rose from table, however, he followed her into the pantry.

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"Diana, will you take a walk with me to-night?" he said, in a voice husky with repressed feeling.

"To-night! Why, I have just promised Bill to go with him over to the husking at the Jenks's. Why don't you go with us? We 're going to have lots of fun," she added with an innocent air of not perceiving his gravity.

"I can't," he said. "Besides, I wanted to walk with you alone. I had something special I wanted to say."

"Bless me, how you frighten one! You look solemn as a hearse; but I promised to go with Bill to-night, and I suspect another time will do just as well. What you have to say will keep, I suppose," she said mischievously.

He turned away quickly.

"I should really like to know what 's the matter with you to-night," she added, but as she spoke he went upstairs and shut the door.

"He 's cross to-night," was Diana's comment. "Well, he 'll have to get over his pet. I sha'n't mind it!"

Upstairs in his room James began the work of putting up the bundle with which he was to go forth to seek his fortune. There stood his books, silent and dear witnesses of the world of hope and culture and refined enjoyment he had been meaning to enter. He was to know them no more. Their mute faces seemed to look at him mournfully as parting friends. He rapidly made his selection, for that night he was to be off in time to reach the vessel before she sailed, and he felt even glad to avoid the Thanksgiving festivities for which he had so little relish. Diana's frolicsome gayety seemed heartbreaking to him, on the same principle that the poet sings: —

> "How can ye chant, ye little birds,
> And I sae weary, fu' o' care?"

To the heart struck through with its first experiences of real suffering all nature is full of cruelty, and the young and light-hearted are a large part of nature.

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"She has no feeling," he said to himself. "Well, there is one reason the more for my going. She won't break her heart for me; nobody loves me but mother, and it 's for her sake I must go. She must n't work herself to death for me."

And then he sat down in the window to write a note to be given to his mother after he had sailed, for he could not trust himself to tell her what he was about to do. He knew that she would try to persuade him to stay, and he felt faint-hearted when he thought of her. "She would sit up early and late, and work for me to the last gasp," he thought; "but father was right. It is selfish of me to take it," and so he sat trying to fashion his parting note into a tone of cheerfulness.

"My dear mother," he wrote, "this will come to you when I have set off on a four years' voyage round the world. Father has convinced me that it 's time for me to be doing something for myself; and I could n't get a school to keep — and, after all, education is got other ways than at college. It 's hard to go, because I love home, and hard because you will miss me — though no one else will. But father may rely upon it, I will not be a burden on him another day. Sink or swim, I shall never come back till I have enough to do for myself and you too. So good-by, dear mother. I know you will always pray for me, and wherever I am I shall try to do just as I think you would want me to do. I know your prayers will follow me, and I shall always be your affectionate son.

"P. S. The boys may have those chestnuts and walnuts in my room — and in my drawer there is a bit of ribbon with a locket on it I was going to give cousin Diana. Perhaps she won't care for it, though; but if she does, she is welcome to it — it may put her in mind of old times."

And this is all he said, with bitterness in his heart, as he leaned on the window and looked out at the great yellow moon that was shining so bright as to show the golden hues

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of the overhanging elm boughs and the scarlet of an adjoining maple.

A light ripple of laughter came up from below, and a chestnut thrown up struck him on the hand, and he saw Diana and Bill step from out the shadowy porch.

"There 's a chestnut for you, Mr. Owl," she called gayly, "if you will stay moping up there! Come, now, it 's a splendid evening; won't you come?"

"No, thank you. I sha'n't be missed," was the reply.

"That 's true enough; the loss is your own. Good-by, Mr. Philosopher."

"Good-by, Diana."

Something in the tone struck strangely through her heart. It was the voice of what Diana never had felt yet — deep suffering — and she gave a little shiver.

"What an awfully solemn voice James has sometimes," she said; and then added, with a laugh, "it would make his fortune as a Methodist minister."

The sound of the light laugh and little snatches and echoes of gay talk came back like heartless elves to mock Jim's sorrow.

"So much for her," he said, and turned to go and look for his mother.

CHAPTER V

MOTHER AND SON

He knew where he should find her. There was a little, low work-room adjoining the kitchen that was his mother's sanctum. There stood her work-basket — there were always piles and piles of work, begun or finished; and there also her few books at hand, to be glanced into in rare snatches of leisure in her busy life. The old-time New England house mother was not a mere unreflective drudge of domestic

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toil. She was a reader and a thinker, keenly appreciative in intellectual regions. The literature of that day in New England was sparse; but, whatever there was, whether in this country or in England, that was noteworthy, was matter of keen interest, and Mrs. Pitkin's small library was very dear to her. No nun in a convent under vows of abstinence ever practiced more rigorous self-denial than she did in the restraints and government of intellectual tastes and desires. Her son was dear to her as the fulfillment and expression of her unsatisfied craving for knowledge, the possessor of those fair fields of thought which duty forbade her to explore.

James stood and looked in at the window, and saw her sorting and arranging the family mending, busy over piles of stockings and shirts, while on the table beside her lay her open Bible, and she was singing to herself, in a low, sweet undertone, one of the favorite minor-keyed melodies of those days: —

> "O God, our help in ages past,
> Our hope for years to come,
> Our shelter from the stormy blast
> And our eternal home!"

An indescribable feeling, blended of pity and reverence, swelled in his heart as he looked at her and marked the whitening hair, the thin worn little hands so busy with their love work, and thought of all the bearing and forbearing, the waiting, the watching, the long-suffering that had made up her life for so many years. The very look of exquisite calm and resolved strength in her patient eyes and in the gentle lines of her face had something that seemed to him sad and awful — as the purely spiritual always looks to the more animal nature. With his blood bounding and tingling in his veins, his strong arms pulsating with life, and his heart full of a man's vigor and resolve, his mother's life seemed to him to be one of weariness and drudgery, of

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constant, unceasing self-abnegation. Calm he knew she was, always sustained, never faltering; but her victory was one which, like the spiritual sweetness in the face of the dying, had something of sadness for the living heart. He opened the door and came in, sat down by her on the floor, and laid his head in her lap.

"Mother, you never rest; you never stop working."

"Oh, no!" she said gayly; "I'm just going to stop now. I had only a few last things I wanted to get done."

"Mother, I can't bear to think of you; your life is too hard. We all have our amusements, our rests, our changes; your work is never done; you are worn out, and get no time to read, no time for anything but drudgery."

"Don't say drudgery, my boy — work done for those we love never is drudgery. I'm so happy to have you all around me I never feel it."

"But, mother, you are not strong, and I don't see how you can hold out to do all you do."

"Well," she said simply, "when my strength is all gone I ask God for more, and he always gives it. 'They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.'" And her hand involuntarily fell on the open Bible.

"Yes, I know it," he said, following her hand with his eyes; while, "Mother," he said, "I want you to give me your Bible and take mine. I think yours would do me more good."

There was a little bright flush and a pleased smile on his mother's face —

"Certainly, my boy, I will."

"I see you have marked your favorite places," he added. "It will seem like hearing you speak to read them."

"With all my heart," she added, taking up the Bible and kissing his forehead as she put it into his hands.

There was a struggle in his heart how to say farewell without saying it — without letting her know that he was

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going to leave her. He clasped her in his arms and kissed her again and again.

"Mother," he said, "if I ever get into heaven it will be through you."

"Don't say that, my son — it must be through a better Friend than I am — who loves you more than I do. I have not died for you — He did."

"Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, then. You I can see — Him I cannot."

His mother looked at him with a face full of radiance, pity, and hope.

"I feel sure you *will*," she said. "You are consecrated," she added, in a low voice, laying her hand on his head.

"Amen," said James, in a reverential tone. He felt that that she was at that moment — as she often was — silently speaking to One invisible of and for him, and the sense of it stole over him like a benediction. There was a pause of tender silence for many minutes.

"Well, I must not keep you up any longer, mother dear — it 's time you were resting. Good-night." And with a long embrace and kiss they separated. He had yet fifteen miles to walk to reach the midnight stage that was to convey him to Salem.

As he was starting from the house with his bundle in his hand, the sound of a gay laugh came through the distant shrubbery. It was Diana and Bill returning from the husking. Hastily he concealed himself behind a clump of old lilac bushes till they emerged into the moonlight and passed into the house. Diana was in one of those paroxysms of young girl frolic which are the effervescence of young, healthy blood, as natural as the gyrations of a bobolink on a clover-head. James was thinking of dark nights and stormy seas, years of exile, mother's sorrows, home perhaps never to be seen more, and the laugh jarred on him like a terrible discord. He watched her into the house, turned, and was gone.

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CHAPTER VI

GONE TO SEA

A little way on in his moonlight walk James's ears were saluted by the sound of some one whistling and crackling through the bushes, and soon Biah Carter emerged into the moonlight, having been out to the same husking where Diana and Bill had been enjoying themselves. The sight of him resolved a doubt which had been agitating James's mind. The note to his mother which was to explain his absence and the reasons for it was still in his coat-pocket, and he had designed sending it back by some messenger at the tavern where he took the midnight stage; but here was a more trusty party. It involved, to be sure, the necessity of taking Biah into his confidence. James was well aware that to tell that acute individual the least particle of a story was like starting a gimlet in a pine board — there was no stop till it had gone through. So he told him in brief that a good berth had been offered to him on the Eastern Star, and he meant to take it to relieve his father of the pressure of his education.

"Wal naow — you don't say so," was Biah's commentary. "Wal, yis, 't is hard sleddin' for the deacon — drefful hard sleddin'. Wal, naow, s'pose you 're disapp'inted — should n't wonder — jes' so. Eddication 's a good thing, but 't aint the only thing naow; folks l'arns a sight rubbin' round the world — and then they make money. Jes' see, there 's Cap'n Stebbins and Cap'n Andrews and Cap'n Merryweather — all livin' on good farms, with good, nice houses, all got goin' to sea. Expect Mis' Pitkin 'll take it sort o' hard, she 's so sot on you; but she 's allers sayin' things is for the best, and maybe she 'll come to think so 'bout this — folks gen'ally does when they can't help them-

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selves. Wal, yis, naow — goin' to walk to the cross-road tavern? Better not. Jest wait a minit and I 'll hitch up and take ye over."

"Thank you, Biah, but I can't stop, and I'd rather walk, so I won't trouble you."

"Wal, look here — don't ye want a sort o' nest-egg? I 've got fifty silver dollars laid up: you take it on venture and give me half what it brings."

"Thank you, Biah. If you 'll trust me with it I 'll hope to do something for us both."

Biah went into the house, and after some fumbling brought out a canvas bag, which he put into James's hand.

"Wanted to go to sea confoundedly myself, but there 's Mariar Jane — she won't hear on't, and turns on the waterworks if I peep a single word. Farmin' 's dreffal slow, but when a feller 's got a gal he 's got a cap'n; he has to mind orders. So you jest trade and we 'll go sheers. I think consid'able of you, and I expect you 'll make it go as fur as anybody."

"I 'll try my best, you may believe, Biah," said James, shaking the hard hand heartily, as he turned on his way towards the cross-roads tavern.

The whole village of Maplewood on Thanksgiving Day morning was possessed of the fact that James Pitkin had gone off to sea in the Eastern Star, for Biah had felt all the sense of importance which the possession of a startling piece of intelligence gives to one, and took occasion to call at the tavern and store on his way up and make the most of his information, so that by the time the bell rang for service the news might be said to be everywhere. The minister's general custom on Thanksgiving Day was to get off a political sermon reviewing the state of New England, the United States of America, and Europe, Asia, and Africa; but it may be doubted if all the affairs of all these conti-

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nents produced as much sensation among the girls in the singers' seat that day as did the news that James Pitkin had gone to sea on a four years' voyage. Curious eyes were cast on Diana Pitkin, and many were the whispers and speculations as to the part she might have had in the move; and certainly she looked paler and graver than usual, and some thought they could detect traces of tears on her cheeks. Some noticed in the tones of her voice that day, as they rose in the soprano, a tremor and pathos never remarked before — the unconscious utterance of a new sense of sorrow, awakened in a soul that up to this time had never known a grief.

For the letter had fallen on the heads of the Pitkin household like a thunderbolt. Biah came in to breakfast and gave it to Mrs. Pitkin, saying that James had handed him that last night, on his way over to take the midnight stage to Salem, where he was going to sail on the Eastern Star to-day — no doubt he 's off to sea by this time. A confused sound of exclamations went up around the table, while Mrs. Pitkin, pale and calm, read the letter and then passed it to her husband without a word. The bright, fixed color in Diana's face had meanwhile been slowly ebbing away, till, with cheeks and lips pale as ashes, she hastily rose and left the table and went to her room. A strange, new, terrible pain — a sensation like being choked or smothered — a rush of mixed emotions — a fearful sense of some inexorable, unalterable crisis having come of her girlish folly — overwhelmed her. Again she remembered the deep tones of his good-by, and how she had only mocked at his emotion. She sat down and leaned her head on her hands in a tearless, confused sorrow.

Deacon Pitkin was at first more shocked and overwhelmed than his wife. His yesterday's talk with James had no such serious purpose. It had been only the escape-valve for his hypochondriac forebodings of the future, and nothing

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was farther from his thoughts than having it bear fruit in any such decisive movement on the part of his son. In fact, he was secretly proud of his talents and his scholarship, and had set his heart on his going through college, and had no more serious purpose in what he said the day before than the general one of making his son feel the difficulties and straits he was put to for him. Young men were tempted at college to be too expensive, he thought, and to forget what it cost their parents at home. In short, the whole thing had been merely the passing off of a paroxysm of hypochondria, and he had already begun to be satisfied that he should raise his interest money that year without material difficulty. The letter showed him too keenly the depth of the suffering he had inflicted on his son, and when he had read it he cast a sort of helpless, questioning look on his wife, and said, after an interval of silence: —

"Well, mother!"

There was something quite pathetic in the appealing look and voice.

"Well, father," she answered in subdued tones; "all we can do now is to leave it."

Leave it!

Those were words often in that woman's mouth, and they expressed that habit of her life which made her victorious over all troubles, that habit of trust in the Infinite Will that actually could and did leave every accomplished event in His hand, without murmur and without conflict. If there was any one thing in her uniformly self-denied life that had been a personal ambition and a personal desire, it had been that her son should have a college education. It was the centre of her earthly wishes, hopes, and efforts. That wish had been cut off in a moment, that hope had sunk under her feet, and now only remained to her the task of comforting the undisciplined soul whose unguided utterances had wrought the mischief. It was not the first time that, wounded by

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a loving hand in this dark struggle of life, she had suppressed the pain of her own hurt that he that had wounded her might the better forgive himself.

"Dear father," she said to him, when over and over he blamed himself for his yesterday's harsh words to his son, "don't worry about it now; you didn't mean it. James is a good boy, and he'll see it right at last; and he is in God's hands, and we must leave him there. He overrules all."

When Mrs. Pitkin turned from her husband she sought Diana in her room.

"Oh, cousin! cousin!" said the girl, throwing herself into her arms. "Is this true? Is James gone! Can't we do anything? Can't we get him back? I've been thinking it over. Oh, if the ship wouldn't sail! and I'd go to Salem and beg him to come back, on my knees. Oh, if I had only known yesterday! Oh, cousin, cousin! he wanted to talk with me, and I would n't hear him! — oh, if I only had, I could have persuaded him out of it! Oh, why did n't I know?"

"There, there, dear child! We must accept it just as it is, now that it is done. Don't feel so. We must try to look at the good."

"Oh, show me that letter," said Diana; and Mrs. Pitkin, hoping to tranquillize her, gave her James's note. "He thinks I don't care for him," she said, reading it hastily. "Well, I don't wonder! But I do care! I love him better than anybody or anything under the sun, and I never will forget him; he's a brave, noble, good man, and I shall love him as long as I live — I don't care who knows it! Give me that locket, cousin, and write to him that I shall wear it to my grave."

"Dear child, there is no writing to him."

"Oh, dear! that's the worst. Oh, that horrid, horrid sea! It's like death — you don't know where they are,

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and you can't hear from them — and a four years' voyage! Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

"Don't, dear child, don't; you distress me," said Mrs. Pitkin.

"Yes, that's just like me," said Diana, wiping her eyes. "Here I am thinking only of myself, and you that have had your heart broken are trying to comfort me, and trying to comfort Cousin Silas. We have both of us scolded and flouted him away, and now you, who suffer the most of either of us, spend your breath to comfort us. It's just like you. But, cousin, I'll try to be good and comfort you. I'll try to be a daughter to you. You need somebody to think of you, for you never think of yourself. Let's go in his room," she said, and taking the mother by the hand they crossed to the empty room. There was his writing-table, there his forsaken books, his papers, — some of his clothes hanging in his closet. Mrs. Pitkin, opening a drawer, took out a locket hung upon a bit of blue ribbon, where there were two locks of hair, one of which Diana recognized as her own, and one of James's. She hastily hung it about her neck and concealed it in her bosom, laying her hand hard upon it, as if she would still the beatings of her heart.

"It seems like a death," she said. "Don't you think the ocean is like death — wide, dark, stormy, unknown? We cannot speak to or hear from them that are on it."

"But people can and do come back from the sea," said the mother, soothingly. "I trust, in God's own time, we shall see James back."

"But what if we never should? Oh, cousin! I can't help thinking of that. There was Michael Davis, — you know — the ship was never heard from."

"Well"—said the mother, after a moment's pause and a choking down of some rising emotion, and turning to a table on which lay a Bible, she opened and read: "If I take the

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wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."

The THEE in this psalm was not to her a name, a shadow, a cipher, to designate the unknowable, it stood for the inseparable Heart-friend — the Father seeing in secret, on whose bosom all her tears of sorrow had been shed, the Comforter and Guide forever dwelling in her soul, and giving peace where the world gave only trouble. Diana beheld her face as it had been the face of an angel. She kissed her, and turned away in silence.

CHAPTER VII

THANKSGIVING AGAIN

Seven years had passed, and once more the Thanksgiving-tide was in Mapleton. This year it had come cold and frosty. Chill driving autumn storms had stripped the painted glories from the trees, and remorseless frosts had chased the hardy ranks of the asters and goldenrods back and back till scarce a blossom could be found in the deepest and most sequestered spots. The great elm over the Pitkin farmhouse had been stripped of its golden glory, and now rose against the yellow evening sky, with its infinite delicacies of network and tracery, in their way quite as beautiful as the full pomp of summer foliage. The air without was keen and frosty, and the knotted twigs of the branches knocked against the roof and rattled and ticked against the upper window-panes as the chill evening wind swept through them.

Seven long years had passed since James sailed. Years of watching, of waiting, of cheerful patience, at first, and at last of resigned sorrow. Once they heard from James, at the first port where the ship stopped. It was a letter dear

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to his mother's heart, manly, resigned, and Christian; expressing full purpose to work with God in whatever calling he should labor, and cheerful hopes of the future. Then came a long, long silence, and then tidings that the Eastern Star had been wrecked on a reef in the Indian Ocean! The mother had given back her treasure into the same beloved hands whence she first received him. "I gave him to God, and God took him," she said. "I shall have him again in God's time." This was how she settled the whole matter with herself. Diana had mourned with all the vehement intensity of her being, but out of the deep baptism of sorrow she had emerged with a new and nobler nature. The vain, trifling, laughing Undine had received a soul and was a true woman. She devoted herself to James's mother with an utter self-sacrificing devotion, resolved as far as in her lay to be both son and daughter to her. She read and studied, and fitted herself as a teacher in a neighboring academy, and persisted in claiming the right of a daughter to place all the amount of her earnings in the family purse.

And this year there was special need. With all his care, with all his hard work and that of his family, Deacon Silas never had been able to raise money to annihilate the debt upon the farm. There seemed to be a perfect fatality about it. Let them all make what exertions they might, just as they were hoping for a sum that should exceed the interest and begin the work of settling the principal would come some loss that would throw them all back. One year their barn was burned just as they had housed their hay. On another a valuable horse died, and then there were fits of sickness among the children, and poor crops in the field, and low prices in the market; in short, as Biah remarked, "The deacon's luck did seem to be sort o' streaky, for do what you might there 's always suthin' to put him back." As the younger boys grew up the deacon had ceased to hire

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help, and Biah had transferred his services to Squire Jones, a rich landholder in the neighborhood, who wanted some one to overlook his place. The increased wages had enabled him to give a home to Maria Jane and a start in life to two or three sturdy little American citizens who played around his house door. Nevertheless, Biah never lost sight of the "deacon's folks" in his multifarious cares, and never missed an opportunity either of doing them a good turn or of picking up any stray item of domestic news as to how matters were going on in that interior. He had privately broached the theory to Miss Briskett, that "arter all it was James that Diany (he always pronounced all names as if they ended in y) was sot on, and that she took it so hard, his goin' off, that it did beat all! Seemed to make another gal of her; he should n't wonder if she 'd come out and jine the church." And Diana not long after unconsciously fulfilled Biah's predictions.

Of late Biah's good offices had been in special requisition, as the deacon had been for nearly a month on a sick-bed with one of those interminable attacks of typhus fever which used to prevail in old times, when the doctor did everything he could to make it certain that a man once brought down with sickness never should rise again. But Silas Pitkin had a constitution derived through an indefinite distance from a temperate, hard-working, godly ancestry, and so withstood both death and the doctor, and was alive and in a convalescent state, which gave hope of his being able to carve the turkey at his Thanksgiving dinner.

The evening sunlight was just fading out of the little "keeping-room," adjoining the bedroom, where the convalescent now was able to sit up most of the day. A cot bed had been placed there, designed for him to lie down upon in intervals of fatigue. At present, however, he was sitting in his armchair, complacently watching the blaze of the hickory fire, or following placidly the motions of his wife's

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knitting-needles. There was an air of calmness and repose on his thin, worn features that never was there in days of old: the haggard, anxious lines had been smoothed away, and that spiritual expression which sickness and sorrow sometimes develops on the human face reigned in its place. It was the "clear shining after rain."

"Wife," he said, "read me something I can't quite remember out of the Bible. It's in the eighth of Deuteronomy, the second verse."

Mrs. Pitkin opened the big family Bible on the stand, and read, "And thou shalt remember all the way in which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee and to know what is in thy heart, and whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

"There, that's it," interrupted the deacon. "That's what I've been thinking of as I've lain here sick and helpless. I've fought hard to keep things straight, and clear the farm, but it's pleased the Lord to bring me low. I've had to lie still and leave all in his hands."

"And where better could you leave all?" said his wife, with a radiant smile.

"Well, just so. I've been saying, 'Here I am, Lord; do with me as seemeth to thee good,' and I feel a great quiet now. I think it's doubtful if we make up the interest this year. I don't know what Bill may get for the hay: but I don't see much prospect of raisin' on't; and yet I don't worry. Even if it's the Lord's will to have the place sold up and we be turned out in our old age, I don't seem to worry about it. His will be done."

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There was a sound of rattling wheels at this moment, and anon there came a brush and flutter of garments, and Diana rushed in, all breezy with the freshness of outdoor air, and caught Mrs. Pitkin in her arms and kissed her first and then the deacon with effusion.

"Here I come for Thanksgiving," she said, in a rich, clear tone; "and here," she added, drawing a roll of bills from her bosom, and putting it into the deacon's hand, "here 's the interest money for this year. I got it all myself, because I wanted to show you I could be good for something."

"Thank you, dear daughter," said Mrs. Pitkin. "I felt sure some way would be found, and now I see what." She added, kissing Diana and patting her rosy cheek, "a very pleasant, pretty way it is, too."

"I was afraid that Cousin Silas would worry and put himself back again about the interest money," said Diana.

"Well, daughter," said the Deacon, "it 's a pity we should go through all we do in this world and not learn anything by it. I hope the Lord has taught me not to worry, but just do my best and leave myself and everything else in his hands. We can't help ourselves — we can't make one hair white or black. Why should we wear our lives out fretting? If I 'd 'a' known that years ago it would 'a' been better for us all."

"Never mind, father, you know it now," said his wife, with a face serene as a star. In this last gift of quietude of soul to her husband she recognized the answer to her prayers of years.

"Well, now," said Diana, running to the window, "I should like to know what Biah Carter is coming here about."

"Oh, Biah 's been very kind to us in this sickness," said Mrs. Pitkin, as Biah's feet resounded on the scraper.

"Good-evenin', Deacon," said Biah, entering; "Good-evenin', Mis' Pitkin. Sarvant, ma'am," to Diana,— "how ye all gettin' on?"

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"Nicely, Biah — well as can be," said Mrs. Pitkin.

"Wal, you see I was up to the store with some o' Squire Jones's bell-flowers. Sim Coan he said he wanted some to sell, and so I took up a couple o' barrels, and I see the darndest big letter there for the Deacon. Miss Briskett she was in, lookin' at it, and so was Deacon Simson's wife; she come in arter some cinnamon sticks. Wal, and they all looked at it and talked it over, and could n't none o' 'em for their lives think what it 's all about, it was sich an almighty thick letter," said Biah, drawing out a long, legal-looking envelope and putting it in the Deacon's hands.

"I hope there is n't bad news in it," said Silas Pitkin, the color flushing apprehensively in his pale cheeks as he felt for his spectacles.

There was an agitated, silent pause while he broke the seals and took out two documents. One was the mortgage on his farm and the other a receipt in full for the money owed on it. The Deacon turned the papers to and fro, gazed on them with a dazed, uncertain air, and then said: —

"Why, mother, do look! Is this so? Do I read it right?"

"Certainly, you do," said Diana, reading over his shoulder. "Somebody 's paid that debt, cousin!"

"Thank God!" said Mrs. Pitkin softly; "He has done it."

"Wal, I swow!" said Biah, after having turned the paper in his hands, "if this 'ere don't beat all! There 's old Squire Norcross's name on't. It 's the receipt, full and square. What 's come over the old crittur? He must 'a' got religion in his old age; but if grace made him do that, grace has done a tough job, that 's all; but it 's done, anyhow, and that 's all you need to care about. Wal, wal, I must git along hum — Mariar Jane 'll be wonderin' where I be. Good-night, all on ye!" and Biah's retreating wagon wheels were off in the distance, rattling furiously,

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for, notwithstanding Maria Jane's wondering, Biah was resolved not to let an hour slip by without declaring the wonderful tidings at the store. The Pitkin family were seated at supper in the big kitchen, all jubilant over the recent news. The father, radiant with the pleasantest excitement, had for the first time come out to take his place at the family board. In the seven years since the beginning of our story the Pitkin boys had been growing apace, and now surrounded the table, quite an army of rosy-cheeked, jolly young fellows, who to-night were in a perfect tumult of animal gayety. Diana twinkled and dimpled and flung her sparkles round among them, and there was unbounded jollity.

"Who 's that looking in at the window?" called out Sam, aged ten, who sat opposite the house door. At that moment the door opened, and a dark stranger, bronzed with travel and dressed in foreign-looking garments, entered.

He stood one moment, all looking curiously at him, then crossing the floor, he kneeled down by Mrs. Pitkin's chair, and throwing off his cap, looked her close in the eyes.

"Mother, don't you know me?"

She looked at him one moment with that still earnestness peculiar to herself, and then fell into his arms. "Oh, my son, my son!"

There were a few moments of indescribable confusion, during which Diana retreated, pale and breathless, to a neighboring window, and stood with her hand over the locket which she had always worn upon her heart.

After a few moments he came, and she felt him by her.

"What, cousin!" he said; "no welcome from you?" She gave one look, and he took her in his arms. She felt the beating of his heart, and he felt hers. Neither spoke, yet each felt at that moment sure of the other.

"I say, boys," said James, "who 'll help bring in my sea chest?"

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Never was sea chest more triumphantly ushered; it was a contest who should get near enough to take some part in its introduction, and soon it was open, and James began distributing its contents.

"There, mother," said he, undoing a heavy black India satin and shaking out its folds, "I 'm determined you shall have a dress fit for you; and here 's a real India shawl to go with it. Get those on and you 'll look as much like a queen among women as you ought to."

Then followed something for every member of the family, received with frantic demonstrations of applause and appreciation by the more juvenile.

"Oh, what 's that?" said Sam, as a package done up in silk paper and tied with silver cord was disclosed.

"That 's — oh — that 's my wife's wedding-dress," said James, unfolding and shaking out a rich satin; "and here 's her shawl," drawing out an embroidered box, scented with sandal-wood.

The boys all looked at Diana, and Diana laughed and grew pale and red all in the same breath, as James, folding back the silk and shawl in their boxes, handed them to her.

Mrs. Pitkin laughed and kissed her, and said gayly, "All right, my daughter, — just right."

What an evening that was, to be sure! What a confusion of joy and gladness; what a half-telling of a hundred things that it would take weeks to tell!

James had paid the mortgage and had money to spare; and how he got it all, and how he was saved at sea, and where he went, and what befell him here and there, he promised to be telling them for six months to come.

"Well, your father must n't be kept up too late," said Mrs. Pitkin. "Let 's have prayers now, and then to-morrow we 'll be fresh to talk more."

So they gathered around the wide kitchen fire and the family Bible was brought out.

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"Father," said James, drawing out of his pocket the Bible his mother had given him at parting, "let me read my Psalm; it has been my Psalm ever since I left you." There was a solemn thrill in the little circle as James read the verses: —

"'They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven; they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet, so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!'"

. . . . . .

When all had left the old kitchen, James and Diana sat by the yet glowing hearth and listened to the crickets, and talked over all the past and the future.

"And now," said James, "it 's seven years since I left you, and to-morrow is the seventh Thanksgiving, and I 've always set my heart on getting home to be married Thanksgiving evening."

"But, dear me, Jim, we can't. There is n't time."

"Why not? — we 've got all the time there is!"

"But the wedding-dress can't be made, possibly."

"Oh, that can wait till the week after. You are pretty enough without it!"

"But what will they all say?"

"Who cares what they say? I don't," said James. "The fact is, I 've set my heart on it, and you owe me something for the way you treated me the last Thanksgiving I was here, seven years ago. Now don't you?"

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"Well, yes, I do, so have it just as you will." And so it was accomplished the next evening.

And among the wonders of Mapleton Miss Briskett announced it as chief, that it was the first time she ever heard of a bride that was married first and had her wedding-dress made the week after! She never had heard of such a thing.

Yet, strange to say, for years after neither of the parties concerned found themselves a bit the worse for it.

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THE FIRST CHRISTMAS OF NEW ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

IN THE HARBOR OF CAPE COD

THE shores of the Atlantic coast of America may well be a terror to navigators. They present an inexorable wall, against which forbidding and angry waves incessantly dash, and around which shifting winds continually rave. The approaches to safe harbors are few in number, intricate and difficult, requiring the skill of practiced pilots. But, as if with a pitying spirit of hospitality, old Cape Cod, breaking from the iron line of the coast, like a generous-hearted sailor intent on helpfulness, stretches an hundred miles outward, and curving his sheltering arms in a protective circle, gives a noble harborage. Of this harbor of Cape Cod the report of our governmental Coast Survey thus speaks: "It is one of the finest harbors for ships of war on the whole of our Atlantic coast. The width and freedom from obstruction of every kind at its entrance and the extent of sea-room upon the bay side make it accessible to vessels of the largest class in almost all winds. This advantage, its capacity, depth of water, excellent anchorage, and the complete shelter it affords from all winds, render it one of the most valuable ship harbors upon our coast."

We have been thus particular in our mention of this place, because here, in this harbor, opened the first scene in the most wonderful drama of modern history. Let us look into the magic mirror of the past and see this harbor of Cape Cod on the morning of the 11th of November, in the year

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of our Lord 1620, as described to us in the simple words of the pilgrims: "A pleasant bay, circled round, except the entrance, which is about four miles over from land to land, compassed about to the very sea with oaks, pines, junipers, sassafras, and other sweet weeds. It is a harbor wherein a thousand sail of ship may safely ride."

Such are the woody shores of Cape Cod as we look back upon them in that distant November day, and the harbor lies like a great crystal gem on the bosom of a virgin wilderness. The "fir-trees, the pine-trees, and the bay," rejoice together in freedom, for as yet the axe has spared them; in the noble bay no shipping has found shelter; no voice or sound of civilized man has broken the sweet calm of the forest. The oak leaves, now turned to crimson and maroon by the autumn frosts, reflect themselves in flushes of color on the still waters. The golden leaves of the sassafras yet cling to the branches though their life has passed, and every brushing wind bears showers of them down to the water. Here and there the dark spires of the cedar and the green leaves and red berries of the holly contrast with the old lighter tints. The forest foliage grows down to the water's edge, so that the dash of the rising and falling tide washes into the shaggy cedar boughs which here and there lean over and dip in the waves. No voice or sound from earth or sky proclaims that anything unwonted is coming or doing on these shores to-day. The wandering Indians, moving their hunting-camps along the woodland paths, saw no sign in the stars that morning, and no different color in the sunrise from what had been in the days of their fathers. Panther and wild-cat under their furry coats felt no thrill of coming dispossession, and saw nothing through their great golden eyes but the dawning of a day just like all other days — when "the sun ariseth and they gather themselves into their dens and lay them down." And yet alike to Indian, panther, and wild-cat, to every oak of the forest, to every foot

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of land in America, from the stormy Atlantic to the broad Pacific, that day was a day of days.

There had been stormy and windy weather, but now dawned on the earth one of those still, golden times of November, full of dreamy rest and tender calm. The skies above were blue and fair, and the waters of the curving bay were a downward sky — a magical underworld, wherein the crimson oaks, and the dusk plumage of the pine, and the red holly-berries, and yellow sassafras leaves, all flickered and glinted in wavering bands of color as soft winds swayed the glassy floor of waters. In a moment, there is heard in the silent bay a sound of a rush and ripple, different from the lap of the many-tongued waves on the shore; and silently as a cloud, with white wings spread, a little vessel glides into the harbor. A little craft is she — not larger than the fishing-smacks that ply their course along our coasts in summer; but her decks are crowded with men, women, and children, looking out with joyous curiosity on the beautiful bay, where, after many dangers and storms, they first have found safe shelter and hopeful harbor.

That small, unknown ship was the Mayflower; those men and women who crowded her decks were that little handful of God's own wheat which had been flailed by adversity, tossed and winnowed till every husk of earthly selfishness and self-will had been beaten away from them and left only pure seed, fit for the planting of a new world. It was old Master Cotton Mather who said of them, "The Lord sifted three countries to find seed wherewith to plant America." Hark now to the hearty cry of the sailors, as with a plash and a cheer the anchor goes down, just in the deep water inside of Long Point; and then, says their journal, "being now passed the vast ocean and sea of troubles, before their preparation unto further proceedings as to seek out a place for habitation, they fell down on their knees and blessed the Lord, the God of heaven, who had

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brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all perils and miseries thereof."

Let us draw nigh and mingle with this singular act of worship. Elder Brewster, with his well-worn Geneva Bible in hand, leads the thanksgiving in words which, though thousands of years old, seem as if written for the occasion of that hour: —

"Praise the Lord because he is good, for his mercy endureth forever. Let them which have been redeemed of the Lord show how he delivereth them from the hand of the oppressor. And gathered them out of the lands: from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south, when they wandered in deserts and wildernesses out of the way and found no city to dwell in. Both hungry and thirsty, their soul failed in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their troubles, and he delivered them in their distresses. And led them forth by the right way, that they might go unto a city of habitation. They that go down to the sea and occupy by the great waters: they see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, and it lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to heaven, and descend to the deep: so that their soul melteth for trouble. They are tossed to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and all their cunning is gone. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He turneth the storm to a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. When they are quieted they are glad, and he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be."

As yet, the treasures of sacred song which are the liturgy of modern Christians had not arisen in the church. There was no Watts, and no Wesley, in the days of the pilgrims; they brought with them in each family, as the most precious of household possessions, a thick volume containing, first, the Book of Common Prayer, with the Psalter appointed to

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be read in churches; second, the whole Bible in the Geneva translation, which was the basis on which our present English translation was made; and, third, the Psalms of David, in metre, by Sternhold and Hopkins, with the music notes of the tunes, adapted to singing. Therefore it was that our little band were able to lift up their voices together in song, and that the noble tones of Old Hundred for the first time floated over the silent bay and mingled with the sound of winds and waters, consecrating our American shores.

"All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice:
Him serve with fear, His praise forthtell;
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

"The Lord, ye know, is God indeed;
Without our aid He did us make;
We are His flock, He doth us feed,
And for his sheep He doth us take.

"Oh enter then His gates with praise,
Approach with joy His courts unto:
Praise, laud, and bless His name always,
For it is seemly so to do.

"For why? The Lord our God is good,
His mercy is forever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure."

This grand hymn rose and swelled and vibrated in the still November air; while in between the pauses came the warble of birds, the scream of the jay, the hoarse call of hawk and eagle, going on with their forest ways all unmindful of the new era which had been ushered in with those solemn sounds.

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CHAPTER II

THE FIRST DAY ON SHORE

The sound of prayer and psalm-singing died away on the shore, and the little band, rising from their knees, saluted each other in that genial humor which always possesses a ship's company when they have weathered the ocean and come to land together.

"Well, Master Jones, here we are," said Elder Brewster cheerily to the shipmaster.

"Ay, ay, sir, here we be sure enough; but I've had many a shrewd doubt of this upshot. I tell you, sirs, when that beam amidships sprung and cracked, Master Coppin here said we must give over — hands could n't bring her through. Thou rememberest, Master Coppin?"

"That I do," replied Master Coppin, the first mate, a stocky, cheery sailor, with a face red and shining as a glazed bun. "I said then that praying might save her, perhaps, but nothing else would."

"Praying would n't have saved her," said Master Brown, the carpenter, "if I had not put in that screw and worked the beam to her place again."

"Ay, ay, Master Carpenter," said Elder Brewster, "the Lord hath abundance of the needful ever to his hand. When He wills to answer prayer, there will be found both carpenter and screws in their season, I trow."

"Well, Deb," said Master Coppin, pinching the ear of a great mastiff bitch who sat by him, "what sayest thou? Give us thy mind on it, old girl; say, wilt thou go deer-hunting with us yonder?"

The dog, who was full of the excitement all around, wagged her tail and gave three tremendous barks, whereat a little spaniel with curly ears, that stood by Rose Standish, barked aloud.

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"Well done!" said Captain Miles Standish. "Why, here is a salute of ordnance! Old Deb is in the spirit of the thing and opens out like a cannon. The old girl is spoiling for a chase in those woods."

"Father, may I go ashore? I want to see the country," said Wrestling Brewster, a bright, sturdy boy, creeping up to Elder Brewster and touching his father's elbow.

Thereat there was a crying to the different mothers of girls and boys tired of being cooped up, — "Oh, mother, mother, ask that we may all go ashore."

"For my part," said old Margery, the serving-maid to Elder Brewster, "I want to go ashore to wash and be decent, for there is n't a soul of us hath anything fit for Christians. There be springs of water, I trow."

"Never doubt it, my woman," said Elder Brewster; "but all things in their order. How say you, Mr. Carver? You are our governor. What order shall we take?"

"We must have up the shallop," said Carver, "and send a picked company to see what entertainment there may be for us on shore."

"And I counsel that all go well armed," quoth Captain Miles Standish, "for these men of the forest are sharper than a thorn hedge. What! what!" he said, looking over to the eager group of girls and boys, "ye would go ashore, would ye? Why, the lions and bears will make one mouthful of ye."

"I'm not afraid of lions," said young Wrestling Brewster in an aside to little Love Winslow, a golden-haired, pale-cheeked child, of a tender and spiritual beauty of face.

"I'd like to meet a lion," he added, "and serve him as Samson did. I'd get honey out of him, I promise."

"Oh, there you are, young Master Boastful!" said old Margery. "Mind the old saying, 'Brag is a good dog, but Holdfast is better.'"

"Dear husband," said Rose Standish, "wilt thou go ashore in this company?"

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"Why, aye, sweetheart, what else am I come for, and who should go if not I?"

"Thou art so very venturesome, Miles."

"Even so, my Rose of the wilderness. Why else am I come on this quest? Not being good enough to be in your church nor one of the saints, I come for an arm of flesh to them, and so, here goes on my armor."

And as he spoke, he buried his frank, good-natured countenance in an iron headpiece, and Rose hastened to help him adjust his corselet.

The clang of armor, the bustle and motion of men and children, the barking of dogs, and the cheery heave-O! of the sailors marked the setting off of the party which comprised some of the gravest and wisest, as well as the youngest and most able-bodied of the ship's company. The impatient children ran in a group and clustered on the side of the ship to see them go. Old Deb, with her two half-grown pups, barked and yelped after her master in the boat, running up and down the vessel's deck with piteous cries of impatience.

"Come hither, dear old Deb," said little Love Winslow, running up and throwing her arms round the dog's rough neck; "thou must not take on so; thy master will be back again; so be a good dog now, and lie down."

And the great rough mastiff quieted down under her caresses, and sitting down by her she patted and played with her, with her little thin hands.

"See the darling," said Rose Standish; "what a way that baby hath! In all the roughness and the terrors of the sea she hath been like a little sunbeam to us, yet she is so frail!"

"She hath been marked in the womb by the troubles her mother bore," said old Margery, shaking her head. "She never had the ways of other babies, but hath ever that wistful look — and her eyes are brighter than they should be.

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Mistress Winslow will never raise that child — now mark me!"

"Take care!" said Rose; "let not her mother hear you."

"Why, look at her beside of Wrestling Brewster, or Faith Carver. They are flesh and blood, and she looks as if she had been made out of sunshine. 'T is a sweet babe as ever was; but fitter for the kingdom of heaven than our rough life — deary me! a hard time we have had of it. I suppose it 's all best, but I don't know."

"Oh, never talk that way, Margery," said Rose Standish; "we must all keep up heart, our own and one another's."

"Ah, well-a-day, — I suppose so, but then I look at my good Master Brewster and remember how, when I was a girl, he was at our good Queen Elizabeth's court, ruffling it with the best, and everybody said that there was n't a young man that had good fortune to equal his. Why, Master Davidson, the Queen's Secretary of State, thought all the world of him; and when he went to Holland on the Queen's business, he must take him along; and when he took the keys of the cities there, it was my master that he trusted them to, who used to sleep with them under his pillow. I remember when he came home to the Queen's court, wearing the great gold chain that the States had given him. Ah, me! I little thought he would ever come to a poor man's coat, then!"

"Well, good Margery," said Rose, "it is n't the coat but the heart under it, — that 's the thing. Thou hast more cause of pride in thy master's poverty than in his riches."

"Maybe so, — I don't know," said Margery; "but he hath had many a sore trouble in worldly things, — driven and hunted from place to place in England, clapt into prison, and all he had eaten up with fines and charges and costs."

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"All that is because he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," said Rose; "he shall have his reward by and by."

"Well, there be good men and godly in Old England that get to heaven in better coats and with easy carriages and fine houses and servants, and I would my master had been of such. But if he must come to the wilderness I will come with him. Gracious me! what noise is that?" she exclaimed, as a sudden report of firearms from below struck her ear. "I do believe there is that Frank Billington at the gunpowder; that boy will never leave, I do believe, till he hath blown up the ship's company."

In fact, it appeared that young master Frank, impatient of the absence of his father, had toled Wrestling Brewster and two other of the boys down into the cabin to show them his skill in managing his father's fowling-piece, had burst the gun, scattering the pieces about the cabin.

Margery soon appeared, dragging the culprit after her. "Look here now, Master Malapert, see what you 'll get when your father comes home! Lord-a-mercy! here was half a keg of powder standing open! Enough to have blown us all up! Here, Master Clarke, come and keep this boy with you till his father come back, or we be all sent sky high before we know."

. . . . . .

At eventide the boat came back laden to the water's edge with the first gettings and givings from the new soil of America. There is a richness and sweetness gleaming through the brief records of these men in their journals, which shows how the new land was seen through a fond and tender medium, half poetic; and its new products lend a savor to them of somewhat foreign and rare.

Of this day's expedition the record is thus: —

"That day, so soon as we could, we set ashore some fifteen

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or sixteen men well armed, with some to fetch wood, for we had none left; as also to see what the land was and what inhabitants they could meet with. They found it to be a small neck of land on this side where we lay in the bay, and on the further side the sea, the ground or earth, sand-hills, much like the downs in Holland, but much better; the crust of the earth a spit's depth of excellent black earth; all wooded with oaks, pines, sassafras, juniper, birch, holly, vines, some ash and walnut; the wood for the most part open and without underwood, fit either to walk or to ride in. At night our people returned and found not any people or inhabitants, and laded their boat with juniper, which smelled very sweet and strong, and of which we burned for the most part while we were there."

"See there," said little Love Winslow, "what fine red berries Captain Miles Standish hath brought."

"Yea, my little maid, there is a brave lot of holly berries for thee to dress the cabin withal. We shall not want for Christmas greens here, though the houses and churches are yet to come."

"Yea, Brother Miles," said Elder Brewster, "the trees of the Lord are full of sap in this land, even the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted. It hath the look to me of a land which the Lord our God hath blessed."

"There is a most excellent depth of black, rich earth," said Carver, "and a great tangle of grapevines, whereon the leaves in many places yet hung, and we picked up stores of walnuts under a tree — not so big as our English ones — but sweet and well-flavored."

"Know ye, brethren, what in this land smelleth sweetest to me?" said Elder Brewster. "It is the smell of liberty. The soil is free — no man hath claim thereon. In Old England a poor man may starve right on his mother's bosom; there may be stores of fish in the river, and bird and fowl flying, and deer running by, and yet though a

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man's children be crying for bread, an he catch a fish or snare a bird, he shall be snatched up and hanged. This is a sore evil in Old England; but we will make a country here for the poor to dwell in, where the wild fruits and fish and fowl shall be the inheritance of whosoever will have them; and every man shall have his portion of our good mother earth, with no lords and no bishops to harry and distrain, and worry with taxes and tithes."

"Amen, brother!" said Miles Standish, "and thereto I give my best endeavors with sword and buckler."

CHAPTER III

CHRISTMAS-TIDE IN PLYMOUTH HARBOR

For the rest of that month of November the Mayflower lay at anchor in Cape Cod harbor, and formed a floating home for the women and children, while the men were out exploring the country, with a careful and steady shrewdness and good sense, to determine where should be the site of the future colony. The record of their adventures is given in their journals with that sweet homeliness of phrase which hangs about the Old English of that period like the smell of rosemary in an ancient cabinet.

We are told of a sort of picnic day, when "our women went on shore to wash and all to refresh themselves;" and fancy the times there must have been among the little company, while the mothers sorted and washed and dried the linen, and the children, under the keeping of the old mastiffs and with many cautions against the wolves and wild cubs, once more had liberty to play in the green wood. For it appears in these journals how, in one case, the little spaniel of John Goodman was chased by two wolves, and was fain to take refuge between his master's legs for shelter. Goodman "had nothing in hand," says the journal, "but

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took up a stick and threw at one of them and hit him, and they presently ran away, but came again. He got a paleboard in his hand, but they both sat on their tails a good while, grinning at him, and then went their way and left him."

Such little touches show what the care of families must have been in the woodland picnics, and why the ship was, on the whole, the safest refuge for the women and children. We are told, moreover, how the party who had struck off into the wilderness, "having marched through boughs and bushes and under hills and valleys which tore our very armor in pieces, yet could meet with no inhabitants nor find any fresh water which we greatly stood in need of, for we brought neither beer nor water with us, and our victual was only biscuit and Holland cheese, and a little bottle of aqua vitæ. So we were sore athirst. About ten o'clock we came into a deep valley full of brush, sweet gaile and long grass, through which we found little paths or tracks; and we saw there a deer and found springs of water, of which we were heartily glad, and sat us down and drunk our first New England water with as much delight as we ever drunk drink in all our lives."

Three such expeditions through the country, with all sorts of haps and mishaps and adventures, took up the time until near the 15th of December, when, having selected a spot for their colony, they weighed anchor to go to their future home. Plymouth Harbor, as they found it, is thus described: —

"This harbor is a bay greater than Cape Cod, compassed with a goodly land, and in the bay two fine islands uninhabited, wherein are nothing but woods, oaks, pines, walnuts, beeches, sassafras, vines, and other trees which we know not. The bay is a most hopeful place, innumerable stores of fowl, and excellent good; and it cannot but be of fish in their season. Skate, cod, and turbot, and herring

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we have tasted of — abundance of mussels (clams) the best we ever saw; and crabs and lobsters in their time, infinite."

Of the mainland they write: —

"The land is, for a spit's depth, excellent black mould and fat in some places. Two or three great oaks, pines, walnut, beech, ash, birch, hazel, holly, and sassafras in abundance, and vines everywhere, with cherry-trees, plum-trees, and others which we know not. Many kind of herbs we found here in winter, as strawberry leaves innumerable, sorrel, yarrow, carvel, brook-lime, liverwort, watercresses, with great store of leeks and onions, and an excellent strong kind of flax and hemp."

It is evident from this description that the season was a mild one even thus late in December, that there was still sufficient foliage hanging upon the trees to determine the species, and that the pilgrims viewed their new motherland through eyes of cheerful hope.

And now let us look in the glass at them once more, on Saturday morning of the 23d of December. The little Mayflower lies swinging at her moorings in the harbor, while every man and boy who could use a tool has gone on shore to cut down and prepare timber for future houses. Mary Winslow and Rose Standish are sitting together on deck, fashioning garments, while little Love Winslow is playing at their feet with such toys as the new world afforded her — strings of acorns and scarlet holly berries and some bird-claws and arrowheads and bright-colored ears of Indian corn, which Captain Miles Standish has brought home to her from one of their explorations.

Through the still autumnal air may now and then be heard the voices of men calling to one another on shore, the quick, sharp ring of axes, and anon the crash of falling trees with shouts from juveniles as the great forest monarch is laid low. Some of the women are busy below, sorting over and arrang-

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ing their little household stores and stuff with a view to moving on shore, and holding domestic consultations with each other. A sadness hangs over the little company, for since their arrival the stroke of death had more than once fallen; we find in Bradford's brief record that by the 24th of December six had died. What came nearest to the hearts of all was the loss of Dorothea Bradford, who, when all the men of the party were absent on an exploring tour, accidentally fell over the side of the vessel and sunk in the deep waters. What this loss was to the husband and the little company of brothers and sisters appears by no note or word of wailing, merely by a simple entry which says no more than the record on a gravestone, that, "on the 7th of December, Dorothy, wife of William Bradford, fell over and was drowned."

That much-enduring company could afford themselves few tears. Earthly having and enjoying was a thing long since dismissed from their calculations. They were living on the primitive Christian platform; they "rejoiced as though they rejoiced not," and they "wept as though they wept not," and they "had wives and children as though they had them not," or, as one of themselves expressed it, "We are in all places, strangers, pilgrims, travelers, and sojourners; our dwelling is but a wandering, our abiding but as a fleeting, our home is nowhere but in the heavens, in that house not made with hands, whose builder and maker is God." When one of their number fell they were forced to do as soldiers in the stress of battle — close up the ranks and press on.

But Mary Winslow, as she sat over her sewing, dropped now and then a tear down on her work for the loss of her sister and counselor and long-tried friend. From the lower part of the ship floated up, at intervals, snatches of an old English ditty that Margery was singing while she moved to and fro about her work, one of those genuine English melo-

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dies, full of a rich, strange mournfulness blent with a soothing pathos: —

"Fear no more the heat o' the sun
Nor the furious winter rages,
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages."

The air was familiar, and Mary Winslow, dropping her work in her lap, involuntarily joined in it: —

"Fear no more the frown of the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat,
To thee the reed is as the oak."

"There goes a great tree on shore!" quoth little Love Winslow, clapping her hands. "Dost hear, mother? I 've been counting the strokes — fifteen — and then crackle! crackle! crackle! and down it comes!"

"Peace, darling," said Mary Winslow; "hear what old Margery is singing below: —

"Fear no more the lightning's flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash —
Thou hast finished joy and moan.
All lovers young — all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust."

"Why do you cry, mother?" said the little one, climbing on her lap and wiping her tears.

"I was thinking of dear Auntie, who is gone from us."

"She is not gone from us, mother."

"My darling, she is with Jesus."

"Well, mother, Jesus is ever with us — you tell me that; and if she is with him she is with us too — I know she is, for sometimes I see her. She sat by me last night and stroked my head when that ugly stormy wind waked me — she looked so sweet, oh, ever so beautiful! — and she made me go to sleep so quiet. It is sweet to be as she is, mother — not away from us but with Jesus."

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"These little ones see further in the kingdom than we," said Rose Standish. "If we would be like them, we should take things easier. When the Lord would show who was greatest in his kingdom, he took a little child on his lap."

"Ah me, Rose!" said Mary Winslow, "I am aweary in spirit with this tossing sea-life. I long to have a home on dry land once more, be it ever so poor. The sea wearies me. Only think, it is almost Christmas-time, only two days now to Christmas. How shall we keep it in these woods?"

"Aye, aye," said old Margery, coming up at the moment, "a brave muster and to do is there now in old England; and men and boys going forth singing and bearing home branches of holly, and pine, and mistletoe for Christmas greens. Oh! I remember I used to go forth with them and help dress the churches. God help the poor children; they will grow up in the wilderness and never see such brave sights as I have. They will never know what a church is, such as they are in old England, with fine old windows like the clouds, and rainbows, and great wonderful arches like the very skies above us, and the brave music with the old organs rolling and the boys marching in white garments and singing so as should draw the very heart out of one. All this we have left behind in old England — ah! welladay! welladay!"

"Oh, but, Margery," said Mary Winslow, "we have a 'better country' than old England, where the saints and angels are keeping Christmas; we confess that we are strangers and pilgrims on earth."

And Rose Standish immediately added the familiar quotation from the Geneva Bible: —

"For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. For if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out they had leisure to have returned. But now they desire a better — that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed of them to be called their God."

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The fair young face glowed as she repeated the heroic words, for already, though she knew it not, Rose Standish was feeling the approaching sphere of the angel life. Strong in spirit, as delicate in frame, she had given herself and drawn her martial husband to the support of a great and noble cause; but while the spirit was ready, the flesh was weak, and even at that moment her name was written in the Lamb's Book to enter the higher life in one short month's time from that Christmas. Only one month of sweetness and perfume was that sweet rose to shed over the hard and troubled life of the pilgrims, for the saints and angels loved her, and were from day to day gently untying mortal bands to draw her to themselves. Yet was there nothing about her of mournfulness; on the contrary, she was ever alert and bright, with a ready tongue to cheer and a helpful hand to do; and, seeing the sadness that seemed stealing over Mary Winslow, she struck another key, and, catching little Love up in her arms, said cheerily, "Come hither, pretty one, and Rose will sing thee a brave carol for Christmas. We won't be down-hearted, will we? Hark now to what the minstrels used to sing under my window when I was a little girl: —

"I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas Day in the morning.

"And what was in those ships all three
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
And what was in those ships all three
On Christmas Day in the morning?

"Our Saviour Christ and his laydie,
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
Our Saviour Christ and his laydie
On Christmas day in the morning.

"Pray, whither sailed those ships all three,
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day?

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Oh, they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

"And all the bells on earth shall ring
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;
And all the angels in heaven shall sing
On Christmas Day in the morning.

"Then let us all rejoice amain,
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;
Then let us all rejoice amain
On Christmas Day in the morning."

"Now, is n't that a brave ballad?" said Rose.

"Yea, and thou singest like a real English robin," said Margery, "to do the heart good to hear thee."

CHAPTER IV

ELDER BREWSTER'S CHRISTMAS SERMON

Sunday morning found the little company gathered once more on the ship, with nothing to do but rest and remember their homes, temporal and spiritual — homes backward, in old England, and forward in heaven. They were, every man and woman of them, English to the backbone. From Captain Jones who commanded the ship to Elder Brewster who ruled and guided in spiritual affairs, all alike were of that stock and breeding which made the Englishman of the days of Bacon and Shakespeare, and in those days Christmas was knit into the heart of every one of them by a thousand threads, which no after years could untie.

Christmas carols had been sung to them by nurses and mothers and grandmothers; the Christmas holly spoke to them from every berry and prickly leaf, full of dearest household memories. Some of them had been men of substance among the English gentry, and in their prosperous days had held high festival in ancestral halls in the season of good cheer. Elder Brewster himself had been a rising

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young diplomat in the court of Elizabeth, in the days when the Lord Keeper of the Seals led the revels of Christmas as Lord of Misrule.

So that, though this Sunday morning arose, gray and lowering, with snowflakes hovering through the air, there was Christmas in the thoughts of every man and woman among them — albeit it was the Christmas of wanderers and exiles in a wilderness looking back to bright home-fires across stormy waters.

The men had come back from their work on shore with branches of green pine and holly, and the women had stuck them about the ship, not without tearful thoughts of old home-places, where their childhood fathers and mothers did the same.

Bits and snatches of Christmas carols were floating all around the ship like the land-birds blown far out to sea. In the forecastle Master Coppin was singing: —

"Come, bring with a noise,
My merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing;
While my good dame, she
Bids ye all be free,
And drink to your hearts' desiring.
Drink now the strong beer,
Cut the white loaf here.
The while the meat is shredding
For the rare minced pie,
And the plums stand by
To fill the paste that 's a-kneading."

"Ah, welladay, Master Jones, it is dull cheer to sing Christmas songs here in the woods, with only the owls and the bears for choristers. I wish I could hear the bells of merry England once more."

And down in the cabin Rose Standish was hushing little Peregrine, the first American-born baby, with a Christmas lullaby: —

"This winter's night
I saw a sight —

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A star as bright as day;
And ever among
A maiden sung,
Lullay, by-by, lullay!

"This lovely laydie sat and sung,
And to her child she said,
My son, my brother, and my father dear,
Why lyest thou thus in hayd?
My sweet bird,
Tho' it betide
Thou be not king veray;
But nevertheless
I will not cease
To sing, by-by, lullay!

"The child then spake in his talking,
And to his mother he said,
It happeneth, mother, I am a king,
In crib though I be laid,
For angels bright
Did down alight,
Thou knowest it is no nay;
And of that sight
Thou may'st be light
To sing, by-by, lullay!

"Now, sweet son, since thou art a king,
Why art thou laid in stall?
Why not ordain thy bedding
In some great kiug his hall?
We thinketh 't is right
That king or knight
Should be in good array;
And them among,
It were no wrong
To sing, by-by, lullay!

"Mary, mother, I am thy child,
Tho' I be laid in stall;
Lords and dukes shall worship me,
And so shall kinges all.
And ye shall see
That kinges three
Shall come on the twelfth day;
For this behest
Give me thy breast,
And sing, by-by, lullay!"

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"See here," quoth Miles Standish, "when my Rose singeth, the children gather round her like bees round a flower. Come, let us all strike up a goodly carol together. Sing one, sing all, girls and boys, and get a bit of Old England's Christmas before to-morrow, when we must to our work on shore."

Thereat Rose struck up a familiar ballad-metre of a catching rhythm, and every voice of young and old was soon joining in it: —

"Behold a silly,[1] tender Babe,
In freezing winter night,
In homely manger trembling lies;
Alas! a piteous sight,
The inns are full, no man will yield
This little Pilgrim bed;
But forced He is with silly beasts
In crib to shroud His head.
Despise Him not for lying there,
First what He is inquire:
An orient pearl is often found
In depths of dirty mire.

"Weigh not His crib, His wooden dish,
Nor beasts that by Him feed;
Weigh not His mother's poor attire,
Nor Joseph's simple weed.
This stable is a Prince's court,
The crib His chair of state,
The beasts are parcel of His pomp,
The wooden dish His plate.
The persons in that poor attire
His royal liveries wear;
The Prince Himself is come from Heaven,
This pomp is prizèd there.
With joy approach, O Christian wight,
Do homage to thy King;
And highly praise His humble pomp,
Which He from Heaven doth bring."

The cheerful sounds spread themselves through the ship like the flavor of some rare perfume, bringing softness of heart through a thousand tender memories. Anon, the hour

[1] Old English — simple.

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of Sabbath morning worship drew on, and Elder Brewster read from the New Testament the whole story of the Nativity, and then gave a sort of Christmas homily from the words of St. Paul, in the eighth chapter of Romans, the sixth and seventh verses, which the Geneva version thus renders: —

"For the wisdom of the flesh is death, but the wisdom of the spirit is life and peace.

"For the wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

"Ye know full well, dear brethren, what the wisdom of the flesh sayeth. The wisdom of the flesh sayeth to each one, 'Take care of thyself; look after thyself, to get and to have and to hold and to enjoy.' The wisdom of the flesh sayeth, 'So thou art warm, full, and in good liking, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry, and care not how many go empty and be lacking.' But ye have seen in the gospel this morning that this was not the wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was Lord of all, became poorer than any, that we, through His poverty, might become rich. When our Lord Jesus Christ came, the wisdom of the flesh despised Him; the wisdom of the flesh had no room for Him at the inn.

"There was room enough always for Herod and his concubines, for the wisdom of the flesh set great store by them; but a poor man and woman were thrust out to a stable; and there was a poor baby born whom the wisdom of the flesh knew not, because the wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God.

"The wisdom of the flesh, brethren, ever despiseth the wisdom of God, because it knoweth it not. The wisdom of the flesh looketh at the thing that is great and strong and high; it looketh at riches, at kings' courts, at fine clothes and fine jewels and fine feastings, and it despiseth the little and the poor and the weak.

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"But the wisdom of the Spirit goeth to worship the poor babe in the manger, and layeth gold and myrrh and frankincense at his feet while he lieth in weakness and poverty, as did the wise men who were taught of God.

"Now, forasmuch as our Saviour Christ left His riches and throne in glory and came in weakness and poverty to this world, that he might work out a mighty salvation that shall be to all people, how can we better keep Christmas than to follow in His steps? We be a little company who have forsaken houses and lands and possessions, and come here unto the wilderness that we may prepare a resting-place whereto others shall come to reap what we shall sow. And to-morrow we shall keep our first Christmas, not in flesh-pleasing and in reveling and in fullness of bread, but in small beginning and great weakness, as our Lord Christ kept it when He was born in a stable and lay in a manger.

"To-morrow, God willing, we will all go forth to do good honest Christian work, and begin the first house-building in this our New England — it may be roughly fashioned, but as good a house, I 'll warrant me, as our Lord Christ had on the Christmas Day we wot of. And let us not faint in heart because the wisdom of the world despiseth what we do. Though Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobias the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian make scorn of us, and say, 'What do these weak Jews? If a fox go up, he shall break down their stone wall;' yet the Lord our God is with us, and He can cause our work to prosper.

"The wisdom of the Spirit seeth the grain of mustard-seed, that is the least of all seeds, how it shall become a great tree, and the fowls of heaven shall lodge in its branches. Let us, then, lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees, and let us hope that, like as great salvation to all people came out of small beginnings of Bethlehem, so the work which we shall begin to-morrow shall be for the good of many nations.

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"It is a custom on this Christmas Day to give love-presents. What love-gift giveth our Lord Jesus on this day? Brethren, it is a great one and a precious; as St. Paul said to the Philippians: 'For unto you it is given for Christ, not only that ye should believe on Him, but also that ye should suffer for His sake;' and St. Peter also saith, 'Behold, we count them blessed which endure.' And the holy Apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer rebuke for the name of Jesus.

"Our Lord Christ giveth us of His cup and His baptism; He giveth of the manger and the straw; He giveth of persecutions and afflictions; He giveth of the crown of thorns, and right dear unto us be these gifts.

"And now will I tell these children a story, which a cunning playwright, whom I once knew in our Queen's court, hath made concerning gifts: —

"A great king would marry his daughter worthily, and so he caused three caskets to be made, in one of which he hid her picture. The one casket was of gold set with diamonds, the second of silver set with pearls, and the third a poor casket of lead.

"Now it was given out that each comer should have but one choice, and if he chose the one with the picture he should have the lady to wife.

"Divers kings, knights and gentlemen came from far, but they never won, because they always snatched at the gold and the silver caskets, with the pearls and diamonds. So, when they opened these, they found only a grinning death's-head or a fool's cap.

"But anon cometh a true, brave knight and gentleman, who chooseth for love alone the old leaden casket; and, behold, within is the picture of her he loveth! and they were married with great feasting and content.

"So our Lord Jesus doth not offer himself to us in silver and gold and jewels, but in poverty and hardness and want;

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but whoso chooseth them for His love's sake shall find Him therein whom his soul loveth, and shall enter with joy to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

"And when the Lord shall come again in his glory, then he shall bring worthy gifts with him, for he saith: 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life; to him that overcometh I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone with a new name that no man knoweth save he that receiveth it. He that overcometh and keepeth my words, I will give power over the nations and I will give him the morning star.'

"Let us then take joyfully Christ's Christmas gifts of labors and adversities and crosses to-day, that when he shall appear we may have these great and wonderful gifts at his coming; for if we suffer with him we shall also reign; but if we deny him, he also will deny us."

And so it happens that the only record of Christmas Day in the pilgrims' journal is this: —

"Monday, the 25th, being Christmas Day, we went ashore, some to fell timber, some to saw, some to rive, and some to carry: and so no man rested all that day. But towards night some, as they were at work, heard a noise of Indians, which caused us all to go to our muskets; but we heard no further, so we came aboard again, leaving some to keep guard. That night we had a sore storm of wind and rain. But at night the shipmaster caused us to have some beer aboard."

So worthily kept they the first Christmas, from which comes all the Christmas cheer of New England to-day. There is no record how Mary Winslow and Rose Standish and others, with women and children, came ashore and walked about encouraging the builders; and how little Love gathered stores of bright checkerberries and partridge plums, and was made merry in seeing squirrels and wild rabbits; nor how old Margery roasted certain wild geese to a turn at

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a woodland fire, and conserved wild cranberries with honey for sauce. In their journals the good pilgrims say they found bushels of strawberries in the meadows in December. But we, knowing the nature of things, know that these must have been cranberries, which grow still abundantly around Plymouth harbor.

And at the very time that all this was doing in the wilderness, and the men were working yeomanly to build a new nation, in King James's court the ambassadors of the French King were being entertained with maskings and mummerings, wherein the staple subject of merriment was the Puritans!

So goes the wisdom of the world and its ways — and so goes the wisdom of God!

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LITTLE FOXES

I

FAULT-FINDING

"PAPA, what are you going to give us this winter for our evening readings?" said Jenny.

"I am thinking, for one thing," I replied, "of preaching a course of household sermons from a very odd text prefixed to a discourse which I found at the bottom of the pamphlet-barrel in the garret."

"Don't say sermon, papa, — it has such a dreadful sound; and on winter evenings one wants something entertaining."

"Well, treatise, then," said I, "or discourse, or essay, or prelection; I 'm not particular as to words."

"But what is the queer text that you found at the bottom of the pamphlet-barrel?"

"It was one preached upon by your mother's great-great-grandfather, the very savory and much-respected Simeon Shuttleworth, 'on the occasion of the melancholy defections and divisions among the godly in the town of West Dofield;' and it runs thus: '*Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.*'"

"It is a curious text enough; but I can't imagine what you are going to make of it."

"Simply an essay on Little Foxes," said I, "by which I mean those unsuspected, unwatched, insignificant *little* causes, that nibble away domestic happiness, and make home less than so noble an institution should be.

"You may build beautiful, convenient, attractive houses,

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— you may hang the walls with lovely pictures and stud them with gems of Art; and there may be living there together persons bound by blood and affection in one common interest, leading a life common to themselves and apart from others; and these persons may each one of them be possessed of good and noble traits; there may be a common basis of affection, of generosity, of good principle, of religion; and yet, through the influence of some of these perverse, nibbling, insignificant little foxes, half the clusters of happiness on these so promising vines may fail to come to maturity. A little community of people, all of whom would be willing to die for each other, may not be able to live happily together; that is, they may have far less happiness than their circumstances, their fine and excellent traits, entitle them to expect.

"The reason for this in general is that home is a place not only of strong affections, but of entire unreserves; it is life's undress rehearsal, its back-room, its dressing-room, from which we go forth to more careful and guarded intercourse, leaving behind us much débris of cast-off and every-day clothing. Hence has arisen the common proverb, 'No man is a hero to his valet-de-chambre;' and the common warning, 'If you wish to keep your friend, don't go and live with him.'"

"Which is only another way of saying," said my wife, "that we are all human and imperfect; and the nearer you get to any human being, the more defects you see. The characters that can stand the test of daily intimacy are about as numerous as four-leaved clovers in the meadow; in general those who do not annoy you with positive faults bore you with their insipidity. The evenness and beauty of a strong, well-defined nature, perfectly governed and balanced, is about the last thing one is likely to meet with in one's researches into life."

"But what I have to say," replied I, "is this, — that,

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family life being a state of unreserve, a state in which there are few of those barriers and veils that keep people in the world from seeing each other's defects and mutually jarring and grating upon each other, it is remarkable that it is entered upon and maintained generally with less reflection, less care and forethought, than pertain to most kinds of business which men and women set their hands to. A man does not undertake to run an engine or manage a piece of machinery without some careful examination of its parts and capabilities, and some inquiry whether he have the necessary knowledge, skill, and strength to make it do itself and him justice. A man does not try to play on the violin without seeing if his fingers are long and flexible enough to bring out the harmonies and raise his performance above the grade of dismal scraping to that of divine music. What should we think of a man who should set a whole orchestra of instruments upon playing together without the least provision or forethought as to their chord, and then howl and tear his hair at the result? It is not the fault of the instruments that they grate harsh thunders together; they may each be noble and of celestial temper; but united without regard to their nature, dire confusion is the result. Still worse were it, if a man were supposed so stupid as to expect of each instrument a rôle opposed to its nature, — if he asked of the octave-flute a bass solo, and condemned the trombone because it could not do the work of the many-voiced violin.

"Yet just so carelessly is the work of forming a family often performed. A man and woman come together from some affinity, some partial accord of their nature which has inspired mutual affection. There is generally very little careful consideration of who and what they are, — no thought of the reciprocal influence of mutual traits, — no previous chording and testing of the instruments which are to make lifelong harmony or discord, — and after a short

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period of engagement, in which all their mutual relations are made as opposite as possible to those which must follow marriage, these two furnish their house and begin life together.

"Then in many cases the domestic roof is supposed at once to be the proper refuge for relations and friends on both sides, who also are introduced into the interior concert without any special consideration of what is likely to be the operation of character on character, the play of instrument with instrument; — then follow children, each of whom is a separate entity, a separate will, a separate force in the circle; and thus, with the lesser powers of servants and dependants, family is made up. And there is no wonder if all these chance-assorted instruments, playing together, sometimes make quite as much discord as harmony. For if the husband and wife chord, the wife's sister or husband's mother may introduce a discord; and then again, each child of marked character introduces another possibility of confusion.

"The conservative forces of human nature are so strong and so various, that with all these drawbacks the family state is after all the best and purest happiness that earth affords. But then, with cultivation and care, it might be a great deal happier. Very fair pears have been raised by dropping a seed into a good soil and letting it alone for years; but finer and choicer are raised by the watchings, tendings, prunings of the gardener. Wild grapevines bore very fine grapes, and an abundance of them, before our friend Dr. Grant took up his abode at Iona, and, studying the laws of Nature, conjured up new species of rarer fruit and flavor out of the old. And so, if all the little foxes that infest our domestic vine and fig-tree were once hunted out and killed, we might have fairer clusters and fruit all winter."

"But, papa," said Jenny, "to come to the foxes; let 's know what they are."

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"Well, as the text says, little foxes, the pet foxes of good people, unsuspected little animals, — on the whole, often thought to be really creditable little beasts, that may do good, and at all events cannot do much harm. And as I have taken the Puritanic order in my discourse, I shall set them in sevens, as Noah did his clean beasts in the ark. Now my seven little foxes are these: Fault-Finding, Intolerance, Reticence, Irritability, Exactingness, Discourtesy, Self-Will. And here," turning to my sermon, "is what I have to say about the first of them:" —

FAULT-FINDING,

a most respectable little animal, that many people let run freely among their domestic vines, under the notion that he helps the growth of the grapes, and is the principal means of keeping them in order.

Now it may safely be set down as a maxim, that nobody likes to be found fault with, but everybody likes to find fault when things do not suit him. Let my courteous reader ask him or herself if he or she does not experience a relief and pleasure in finding fault with or about whatever troubles them.

This appears at first sight an anomaly in the provisions of Nature. Generally we are so constituted that what it is a pleasure to us to do it is a pleasure to our neighbor to have us do. It is a pleasure to give, and a pleasure to receive. It is a pleasure to love, and a pleasure to be loved; a pleasure to admire, a pleasure to be admired. It is a pleasure, also, to find fault, but not a pleasure to be found fault with. Furthermore, those people whose sensitiveness of temperament leads them to find the most fault are precisely those who can least bear to be found fault with; they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on other men's shoulders, but they themselves cannot bear the weight of a finger.

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Now the difficulty in the case is this: There are things in life that need to be altered; and that things may be altered, they must be spoken of to the people whose business it is to make the change. This opens wide the door of fault-finding to well-disposed people, and gives them latitude of conscience to impose on their fellows all the annoyances which they themselves feel. The father and mother of a family are fault-finders, *ex officio;* and to them flows back the tide of every separate individual's complaints in the domestic circle, till often the whole air of the house is chilled and darkened by a drizzling Scotch mist of querulousness. Very bad are these mists for grapevines, and produce mildew in many a fair cluster.

Enthusius falls in love with Hermione, because she looks like a moonbeam, — because she is ethereal as a summer cloud, spirituelle. He commences forthwith the perpetual adoration system that precedes marriage. He assures her that she is too good for this world, too delicate and fair for any of the uses of poor mortality, — that she ought to tread on roses, sleep on the clouds, — that she ought never to shed a tear, know a fatigue, or make an exertion, but live apart in some bright, ethereal sphere worthy of her charms. All which is duly chanted in her ear in moonlight walks or sails, and so often repeated that a sensible girl may be excused for believing that a little of it may be true.

Now comes marriage, — and it turns out that Enthusius is very particular as to his coffee, that he is excessively disturbed if his meals are at all irregular, and that he cannot be comfortable with any table arrangements which do not resemble those of his notable mother, lately deceased in the odor of sanctity; he also wants his house in perfect order at all hours. Still he does not propose to provide a trained housekeeper; it is all to be effected by means of certain raw Irish girls, under the superintendence of this angel who was to tread on roses, sleep on clouds, and never know an earthly

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care. Neither has Enthusius ever considered it a part of a husband's duty to bear personal inconveniences in silence. He would freely shed his blood for Hermione, — nay, has often frantically proposed the same in the hours of courtship, when of course nobody wanted it done, and it could answer no manner of use; but now to the idyllic dialogues of that period succeed such as these: —

"My dear, this tea is smoked: can't you get Jane into the way of making it better?"

"My dear, I have tried; but she will not do as I tell her."

"Well, all I know is, other people can have good tea, and I should think we might."

And again at dinner: —

"My dear, this mutton is overdone again; it is *always* overdone."

"Not always, dear, because you recollect on Monday you said it was just right."

"Well, *almost* always."

"Well, my dear, the reason to-day was, I had company in the parlor, and could not go out to caution Bridget, as I generally do. It 's very difficult to get things done with such a girl."

"My mother's things were always well done, no matter what her girl was."

Again: "My dear, you must speak to the servants about wasting the coal. I never saw such a consumption of fuel in a family of our size;" or, "My dear, how can you let Maggie tear the morning paper?" or, "My dear, I shall actually have to give up coming to dinner, if my dinners cannot be regular"; or, "My dear, I wish you would look at the way my shirts are ironed, — it is perfectly scandalous;" or, "My dear, you must not let Johnnie finger the mirror in the parlor;" or, "My dear, you must stop the children from playing in the garret;" or, "My dear, you

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must see that Maggie does n't leave the mat out on the railing when she sweeps the front hall; " and so on, up stairs and down stairs, in the lady's chamber, in attic, garret, and cellar, " my dear " is to see that nothing goes wrong, and she is found fault with when anything does.

Yet Enthusius, when occasionally he finds his sometime angel in tears, and she tells him he does not love her as he once did, repudiates the charge with all his heart, and declares he loves her more than ever, — and perhaps he does. The only difficulty is that she has passed out of the plane of moonshine and poetry into that of actualities. While she was considered an angel, a star, a bird, an evening cloud, of course there was nothing to be found fault with in her; but now that the angel has become chief business-partner in an earthly working firm, relations are different. Enthusius could say the same things over again under the same circumstances, but unfortunately now they never are in the same circumstances. Enthusius is simply a man who is in the habit of speaking from impulse, and saying a thing merely and only because he feels it at the moment. Before marriage he worshiped and adored his wife as an ideal being dwelling in the land of dreams and poetries, and did his very best to make her unpractical and unfitted to enjoy the life to which he was to introduce her after marriage. After marriage he still yields unreflectingly to present impulses, which are no longer to praise, but to criticise and condemn. The very sensibility to beauty and love of elegance, which made him admire her before marriage, now transferred to the arrangement of the domestic ménage, lead him daily to perceive a hundred defects and find a hundred annoyances.

Thus far we suppose an amiable, submissive wife, who is only grieved, not provoked, — who has no sense of injustice, and meekly strives to make good the hard conditions of her lot. Such poor, little, faded women have we seen, looking for all the world like plants that have been nursed and

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forced into bloom in the steam-heat of the conservatory, and are now sickly and yellow, dropping leaf by leaf, in the dry, dusty parlor.

But there is another side of the picture, — where the wife, provoked and indignant, takes up the fault-finding trade in return, and with the keen arrows of her woman's wit searches and penetrates every joint of the husband's armor, showing herself full as unjust and far more capable in this sort of conflict.

Saddest of all sad things is it to see two once very dear friends employing all that peculiar knowledge of each other, which love had given them, only to harass and provoke, — thrusting and piercing with a certainty of aim that only past habits of confidence and affection could have put in their power, wounding their own hearts with every deadly thrust they make at one another, and all for such inexpressibly miserable trifles as usually form the openings of fault-finding dramas.

For the contentions that loosen the very foundations of love, that crumble away all its fine traceries and carved work, about what miserable, worthless things do they commonly begin! — a dinner underdone, too much oil consumed, a newspaper torn, a waste of coal or soap, a dish broken! — and for this miserable sort of trash, very good, very generous, very religious people will sometimes waste and throw away by double-handfuls the very thing for which houses are built and coal burned, and all the paraphernalia of a home established, — their happiness. Better cold coffee, smoky tea, burnt meat, better any inconvenience, any loss, than a loss of love; and nothing so surely burns away love as constant fault-finding.

For fault-finding once allowed as a habit between two near and dear friends comes in time to establish a chronic soreness, so that the mildest, the most reasonable suggestion, the gentlest implied reproof, occasions burning irritation;

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and when this morbid stage has once set in, the restoration of love seems well-nigh impossible.

For example: Enthusius, having risen this morning in the best of humors, in the most playful tones begs Hermione not to make the tails of her g's quite so long; and Hermione fires up with —

"And, pray, what else would n't you wish me to do? Perhaps you would be so good, when you have leisure, as to make out an alphabetical list of the things in me that need correcting."

"My dear, you are unreasonable."

"I don't think so. I should like to get to the end of the requirements of my lord and master sometimes."

"Now, my dear, you really are very silly."

"Please say something original, my dear. I have heard that till it has lost the charm of novelty."

"Come now, Hermione, don't let 's quarrel."

"My dear sir, who thinks of quarreling? Not I; I 'm sure I was only asking to be directed. I trust some time, if I live to be ninety, to suit your fastidious taste. I trust the coffee is right this morning, and the tea, and the toast, and the steak, and the servants, and the front-hall mat, and the upper-story hall-door, and the basement premises; and now I suppose I am to be trained in respect to my general education. I shall set about the tails of my g's at once, but trust you will prepare a list of any other little things that need emendation."

Enthusius pushes away his coffee, and drums on the table.

"If I might be allowed one small criticism, my dear, I should observe that it is not good manners to drum on the table," says his fair opposite.

"Hermione, you are enough to drive a man frantic!" exclaims Enthusius, rushing out with bitterness in his soul, and a determination to take his dinner at Delmonico's.

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Enthusius feels himself an abused man, and thinks there never was such a sprite of a woman, — the most utterly unreasonable, provoking human being he ever met with. What he does not think of is, that it is his own inconsiderate, constant fault-finding that has made every nerve so sensitive and sore, that the mildest suggestion of advice or reproof on the most indifferent subject is impossible. He has not, to be sure, been the guilty partner in this morning's encounter; he has said only what is fair and proper, and she has been unreasonable and cross; but after all, the fault is remotely his.

When Enthusius awoke, after marriage, to find in his Hermione in very deed only a bird, a star, a flower, but no housekeeper, why did he not face the matter like an honest man? Why did he not remember all the fine things about dependence and uselessness with which he had been filling her head for a year or two, and in common honesty exact no more from her than he had bargained for? Can a bird make a good business-manager? Can a flower oversee Biddy and Mike, and impart to their uncircumcised ears the high crafts and mysteries of elegant housekeeping?

If his little wife has to learn her domestic rôle of household duty, as most girls do, by a thousand mortifications, a thousand perplexities, a thousand failures, let him, in ordinary fairness, make it as easy to her as possible. Let him remember with what admiring smiles, before marriage, he received her pretty professions of utter helplessness and incapacity in domestic matters, finding only poetry and grace in what, after marriage, proved an annoyance.

And if a man finds that he has a wife ill adapted to wifely duties, does it follow that the best thing he can do is to blurt out, without form or ceremony, all the criticisms and corrections which may occur to him in the many details of household life? He would not dare to speak with as little preface, apology, or circumlocution to his business-manager,

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to his butcher, or his baker. When Enthusius was a bachelor, he never criticised the table at his boarding-house without some reflection, and studying to take unto himself acceptable words whereby to soften the asperity of the criticism. The laws of society require that a man should qualify, soften, and wisely time his admonitions to those he meets in the outer world, or they will turn again and rend him. But to his own wife, in his own house and home, he can find fault without ceremony or softening. So he can; and he can awake, in the course of a year or two, to find his wife a changed woman, and his home unendurable. He may find, too, that unceremonious fault-finding is a game that two can play at, and that a woman can shoot her arrows with far more precision and skill than a man.

But the fault lies not always on the side of the husband. Quite as often is a devoted, patient, good-tempered man harassed and hunted and baited by the inconsiderate fault-finding of a wife whose principal talent seems to lie in the ability at first glance to discover and make manifest the weak point in everything.

We have seen the most generous, the most warm-hearted and obliging of mortals under this sort of training made the most morose and disobliging of husbands. Sure to be found fault with whatever they do, they have at last ceased doing. The disappointment of not pleasing they have abated by not trying to please.

We once knew a man who married a spoiled beauty, whose murmurs, exactions, and caprices were infinite. He had at last, as a refuge to his wearied nerves, settled down into a habit of utter disregard and neglect; he treated her wishes and her complaints with equal indifference, and went on with his life as nearly as possible as if she did not exist. He silently provided for her what he thought proper, without troubling himself to notice her requests or listen to her grievances. Sickness came, but the heart of her husband

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was cold and gone; there was no sympathy left to warm her. Death came, and he breathed freely as a man released. He married again, — a woman with no beauty, but much love and goodness, — a woman who asked little, blamed seldom, and then with all the tact and address which the utmost thoughtfulness could devise; and the passive, negligent husband became the attentive, devoted slave of her will. He was in her hands as clay in the hands of the potter; the least breath or suggestion of criticism from her lips, who criticised so little and so thoughtfully, weighed more with him than many outspoken words. So different is the same human being, according to the touch of the hand which plays upon him!

I have spoken hitherto of fault-finding as between husband and wife: its consequences are even worse as respects children. The habit once suffered to grow up between the two that constitute the head of the family descends and runs through all the branches. Children are more hurt by indiscriminate, thoughtless fault-finding than by any other one thing. Often a child has all the sensitiveness and all the susceptibility of a grown person, added to the faults of childhood. Nothing about him is right as yet; he is immature and faulty at all points, and everybody feels at perfect liberty to criticise him to right and left, above, below, and around, till he takes refuge either in callous hardness or irritable moroseness.

A bright, noisy boy rushes in from school, eager to tell his mother something he has on his heart, and Number One cries out, — "Oh, you've left the door open! I do wish you would n't always leave the door open! And do look at the mud on your shoes! How many times must I tell you to wipe your feet?"

"Now there you've thrown your cap on the sofa again. When will you learn to hang it up?"

"Don't put your slate there; that is n't the place for it."

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"How dirty your hands are! what have you been doing?"

"Don't sit in that chair; you break the springs, jouncing."

"Child, how your hair looks! Do go upstairs and comb it."

"There, if you have n't torn the braid all off your coat! Dear me, what a boy!"

"Don't speak so loud; your voice goes through my head."

"I want to know, Jim, if it was you that broke up that barrel that I have been saving for brown flour."

"I believe it was you, Jim, that hacked the edge of my razor."

"Jim 's been writing at my desk, and blotted three sheets of the best paper."

Now the question is, if any of the grown people of the family had to run the gauntlet of a string of criticisms on themselves equally true as those that salute unlucky Jim, would they be any better natured about it than he is?

No; but they are grown-up people; they have rights that others are bound to respect. Everybody cannot tell them exactly what he thinks about everything they do. If every one could and did, would there not be terrible reactions?

Servants in general are only grown-up children, and the same considerations apply to them. A raw, untrained Irish girl introduced into an elegant house has her head bewildered in every direction. There are the gas-pipes, the water-pipes, the whole paraphernalia of elegant and delicate conveniences, about which a thousand little details are to be learned, the neglect of any one of which may flood the house, or poison it with foul air, or bring innumerable inconveniences. The setting of a genteel table and the waiting upon it involve fifty possibilities of mistake, each one of which will

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grate on the nerves of a whole family. There is no wonder, then, that the occasions of fault-finding in families are so constant and harassing; and there is no wonder that mistress and maid often meet each other on the terms of the bear and the man who fell together fifty feet down from the limb of a high tree, and lay at the bottom of it, looking each other in the face in helpless, growling despair. The mistress is rasped, irritated, despairing, and with good reason: the maid is the same, and with equally good reason. Yet let the mistress be suddenly introduced into a printing-office, and required, with what little teaching could be given her in a few rapid directions, to set up the editorial of a morning paper, and it is probable she would be as stupid and bewildered as Biddy in her beautifully arranged house.

There are elegant houses which, from causes like these, are ever vexed like the troubled sea that cannot rest. Literally, their table has become a snare before them, and that which should have been for their welfare a trap. Their gas and their water and their fire and their elegances and ornaments, all in unskilled, blundering hands, seem only so many guns in the hands of Satan, through which he fires at their Christian graces day and night, — so that, if their house is kept in order, their temper and religion are not.

I am speaking now to the consciousness of thousands of women who are in will and purpose real saints. Their souls go up to heaven, — its love, its purity, its rest, — with every hymn and prayer and sacrament in church; and they come home to be mortified, disgraced, and made to despise themselves, for the unlovely tempers, the hasty words, the cross looks, the universal nervous irritability, that result from this constant jarring of finely toned chords under unskilled hands.

Talk of haircloth shirts, and scourgings, and sleeping on ashes, as means of saintship! there is no need of them in

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our country. Let a woman once look at her domestic trials as her haircloth, her ashes, her scourges, — accept them, — rejoice in them, — smile and be quiet, silent, patient, and loving under them, — and the convent can teach her no more; she is a victorious saint.

When the damper of the furnace is turned the wrong way by Paddy, after the five hundredth time of explanation, and the whole family awakes coughing, sneezing, strangling, — when the gas is blown out in the nursery by Biddy, who has been instructed every day for weeks in the danger of such a proceeding, — when the tumblers on the dinner-table are found dim and streaked, after weeks of training in the simple business of washing and wiping, — when the ivory-handled knives and forks are left soaking in hot dish-water, after incessant explanations of the consequences, — when four or five half-civilized beings, above, below, and all over the house, are constantly forgetting the most important things at the very moment it is most necessary they should remember them, — there is no hope for the mistress morally, unless she can in very deed and truth accept her trials religiously, and conquer by accepting. It is not apostles alone who can take pleasure in necessities and distresses, but mothers and housewives also, if they would learn of the Apostle, might say, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

The burden ceases to gall when we have learned how to carry it. We can suffer patiently, if we see any good come of it, and say, as an old black woman of our acquaintance did of an event that crossed her purpose, "Well, Lord, if it 's you, send it along."

But that this may be done, that home life, in our unsettled, changing state of society, may become peaceful and restful, there is one Christian grace, much treated of by mystic writers, that must return to its honor in the Christian Church. I mean, — THE GRACE OF SILENCE. No words

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can express, no tongue can tell, the value of NOT SPEAKING. "Speech is silvern, but silence is golden," is an old and very precious proverb.

"But," say many voices, "what is to become of us, if we may not speak? Must we not correct our children and our servants and each other? Must we let people go on doing wrong to the end of the chapter?"

No; fault must be found; faults must be told, errors corrected. Reproof and admonition are duties of householders to their families, and of all true friends to one another.

But, gentle reader, let us look over life, our own lives and the lives of others, and ask, How much of the fault-finding which prevails has the least tendency to do any good? How much of it is well-timed, well-pointed, deliberate, and just, so spoken as to be effective?

"A wise reprover upon an obedient ear" is one of the rare things spoken of by Solomon, — the rarest, perhaps, to be met with. How many really religious people put any of their religion into their manner of performing this most difficult office? We find fault with a stove or furnace which creates heat only to go up chimney and not warm the house. We say it is wasteful. Just so wasteful often seem prayer-meetings, church services, and sacraments; they create and excite lovely, gentle, holy feelings, — but if these do not pass out into the atmosphere of daily life, and warm and clear the air of our homes, there is a great waste in our religion.

We have been on our knees, confessing humbly that we are as awkward in heavenly things, as unfit for the Heavenly Jerusalem, as Biddy and Mike, and the little beggar-girl on our doorsteps, are for our parlors. We have deplored our errors daily, hourly, and confessed that "the remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable," and then we draw near in the sacrament to that In-

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carnate Divinity whose infinite love covers all our imperfections with the mantle of His perfections. But when we return, do we take our servants and children by the throat because they are as untrained and awkward and careless in earthly things as we have been in heavenly? Does no remembrance of Christ's infinite patience temper our impatience, when we have spoken seventy times seven, and our words have been disregarded? There is no mistake as to the sincerity of the religion which the Church excites. What we want is to have it used in common life, instead of going up like hot air in a fireplace to lose itself in the infinite abysses above.

In reproving and fault-finding, we have beautiful examples in Holy Writ. When Saint Paul has a reproof to administer to delinquent Christians, how does he temper it with gentleness and praise! how does he first make honorable note of all the good there is to be spoken of! how does he give assurance of his prayers and love! — and when at last the arrow flies, it goes all the straighter to the mark for this carefulness.

But there was a greater, a purer, a lovelier than Paul, who made His home on earth with twelve plain men, ignorant, prejudiced, slow to learn, — and who to the very day of His death were still contending on a point which He had repeatedly explained, and troubling His last earthly hours with the old contest, "Who should be greatest." When all else failed, on His knees before them as their servant, tenderly performing for love the office of a slave, He said, "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

When parents, employers, and masters learn to reprove in this spirit, reproofs will be more effective than they now are. It was by the exercise of this spirit that Fénelon transformed the proud, petulant, irritable, selfish Duke of Burgundy, making him humble, gentle, tolerant of others,

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and severe only to himself: it was he who had for his motto that "Perfection alone can bear with imperfection."

But apart from the fault-finding which has a definite aim, how much is there that does not profess or intend or try to do anything more than give vent to an irritated state of feeling! The nettle stings us, and we toss it with both hands at our neighbor; the fire burns us, and we throw coals and hot ashes at all and sundry of those about us.

There is fretfulness, a mizzling, drizzling rain of discomforting remark; there is grumbling, a northeast storm that never clears; there is scolding, the thunderstorm with lightning and hail. All these are worse than useless; they are positive sins, by whomsoever indulged, — sins as great and real as many that are shuddered at in polite society. All these are for the most part but the venting on our fellow beings of morbid feelings resulting from dyspepsia, overtaxed nerves, or general ill health.

A minister eats too much mince-pie, goes to his weekly lecture, and seeing only half a dozen people there, proceeds to grumble at those half dozen for the sins of such as stay away. "The Church is cold, there is no interest in religion," and so on: a simple outpouring of the blues.

You and I do in one week the work we ought to do in six; we overtax nerve and brain, and then have weeks of darkness in which everything at home seems running to destruction. The servants never were so careless, the children never so noisy, the house never so disorderly, the State never so ill-governed, the Church evidently going over to Antichrist. The only thing, after all, in which the existing condition of affairs differs from that of a week ago is, that we have used up our nervous energy, and are looking at the world through blue spectacles. We ought to resist the devil of fault-finding at this point, and cultivate silence as a grace till our nerves are rested. There are times when no one should trust himself to judge his neighbors, or re-

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prove his children and servants, or find fault with his friends, — for he is so sharp-set that he cannot strike a note without striking too hard. Then is the time to try the grace of silence, and, what is better than silence, the power of prayer.

But it being premised that we are never to fret, never to grumble, never to scold, and yet it being our duty in some way to make known and get rectified the faults of others, it remains to ask how; and on this head we will improvise a parable of two women.

Mrs. Standfast is a woman of high tone, and possessed of a power of moral principle that impresses one even as sublime. All her perceptions of right and wrong are clear, exact, and minute; she is charitable to the poor, kind to the sick and suffering, and devoutly and earnestly religious. In all the minutiæ of woman's life she manifests an inconceivable precision and perfection. Everything she does is perfectly done. She is true to all her promises to the very letter, and so punctual that railroad time might be kept by her instead of a chronometer.

Yet, with all these excellent traits, Mrs. Standfast has not the faculty of making a happy home. She is that most hopeless of fault-finders, — a fault-finder from principle. She has a high, correct standard for everything in the world, from the regulation of the thoughts down to the spreading of a sheet or the hemming of a towel; and to this exact standard she feels it her duty to bring every one in her household. She does not often scold, she is not actually fretful, but she exercises over her household a calm, inflexible severity, rebuking every fault; she overlooks nothing, she excuses nothing, she will accept of nothing in any part of her domain but absolute perfection; and her reproofs are aimed with a true and steady point, and sent with a force that makes them felt by the most obdurate.

Hence, though she is rarely seen out of temper, and sel-

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dom or never scolds, yet she drives every one around her to despair by the use of the calmest and most elegant English. Her servants fear, but do not love her. Her husband, an impulsive, generous man, somewhat inconsiderate and careless in his habits, is at times perfectly desperate under the accumulated load of her disapprobation. Her children regard her as inhabiting some high, distant, unapproachable mountain-top of goodness, whence she is always looking down with reproving eyes on naughty boys and girls. They wonder how it is that so excellent a mamma should have children who, let them try to be good as hard as they can, are always sure to do something dreadful every day.

The trouble with Mrs. Standfast is, not that she has a high standard, and not that she purposes and means to bring every one up to it, but that she does not take the right way. She has set it down in her mind that to blame a wrong-doer is the only way to cure wrong. She has never learned that it is as much her duty to praise as to blame, and that people are drawn to do right by being praised when they do it, rather than driven by being blamed when they do not.

Right across the way from Mrs. Standfast is Mrs. Easy, a pretty little creature, with not a tithe of her moral worth, — a merry, pleasure-loving woman, of no particular force of principle, whose great object in life is to avoid its disagreeables and to secure its pleasures.

Little Mrs. Easy is adored by her husband, her children, her servants, merely because it is her nature to say pleasant things to every one. It is a mere tact of pleasing, which she uses without knowing it. While Mrs. Standfast, surveying her well-set dining-table, runs her keen eye over everything, and at last brings up with, "Jane, look at that black spot on the salt-spoon! I am astonished at your carelessness!" — Mrs. Easy would say, "Why, Jane,

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where did you learn to set a table so nicely? All looking beautifully, except, — ah! let 's see, — just give a rub to this salt-spoon; — now all is quite perfect." Mrs. Standfast's servants and children hear only of their failures; these are always before them and her. Mrs. Easy's servants hear of their successes. She praises their good points; tells them they are doing well in this, that, and the other particular; and finally exhorts them, on the strength of having done so many things well, to improve in what is yet lacking. Mrs. Easy's husband feels that he is always a hero in her eyes, and her children feel that they are dear good children, notwithstanding Mrs. Easy sometimes has her little tiffs of displeasure, and scolds roundly when something falls out as it should not.

The two families show how much more may be done by a very ordinary woman, through the mere instinct of praising and pleasing, than by the greatest worth, piety, and principle, seeking to lift human nature by a lever that never was meant to lift it by.

The faults and mistakes of us poor human beings are as often perpetuated by despair as by any other one thing. Have we not all been burdened by a consciousness of faults that we were slow to correct because we felt discouraged? Have we not been sensible of a real help sometimes from the presence of a friend who thought well of us, believed in us, set our virtues in the best light, and put our faults in the background?

Let us depend upon it, that the flesh and blood that are in us, — the needs, the wants, the despondencies, — are in each of our fellows, in every awkward servant and careless child.

Finally, let us all resolve, —

First, to attain to the grace of SILENCE.

Second, to deem all FAULT-FINDING that does no good a SIN; and to resolve, when we are happy ourselves, not to

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poison the atmosphere for our neighbors by calling on them to remark every painful and disagreeable feature of their daily life.

Third, to practice the grace and virtue of PRAISE. We have all been taught that it is our duty to praise God, but few of us have reflected on our duty to praise men; and yet for the same reason that we should praise the divine goodness it is our duty to praise human excellence. We should praise our friends, — our near and dear ones; we should look on and think of their virtues till their faults fade away; and when we love most, and see most to love, then only is the wise time wisely to speak of what should still be altered.

Parents should look out for occasions to commend their children, as carefully as they seek to reprove their faults; and employers should praise the good their servants do as strictly as they blame the evil.

Whoever undertakes to use this weapon will find that praise goes farther in many cases than blame. Watch till a blundering servant does something well, and then praise him for it, and you will see a new fire lighted in the eye, and often you will find that in that one respect at least you have secured excellence thenceforth.

When you blame, which should be seldom, let it be alone with the person, quietly, considerately, and with all the tact you are possessed of. The fashion of reproving children and servants in the presence of others cannot be too much deprecated. Pride, stubbornness, and self-will are aroused by this, while a more private reproof might be received with thankfulness.

As a general rule, I would say, treat children in these respects just as you would grown people; they are grown people in miniature, and need as careful consideration of their feelings as any of us.

Lastly, let us all make a bead-roll, a holy rosary, of all that

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is good and agreeable in our position, our surroundings, our daily lot, of all that is good and agreeable in our friends, our children, our servants, and charge ourselves to repeat it daily, till the habit of our minds be to praise and to commend; and so doing, we shall catch and kill one *Little Fox* who hath destroyed many tender grapes.

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II

IRRITABILITY

It was that Christmas Day that did it; I 'm quite convinced of that; and the way it was is what I am going to tell you.

You see, among the various family customs of us Crowfields, the observance of all sorts of fêtes and festivals has always been a matter of prime regard; and among all the festivals of the round ripe year none is so joyous and honored among us as Christmas.

Let no one upon this prick up the ears of Archæology, and tell us that by the latest calculations of chronologists our ivy-grown and holly-mantled Christmas is all a hum, — that it has been demonstrated, by all sorts of signs and tables, that the august event it celebrates did not take place on the 25th of December. Supposing it be so, what have we to do with that? If so awful, so joyous an event ever took place on our earth, it is surely worth commemoration. It is the event we celebrate, not the time. And if all Christians for eighteen hundred years, while warring and wrangling on a thousand other points, have agreed to give this one 25th of December to peace and good-will, who is he that shall gainsay them, and for an historic scruple turn his back on the friendly greetings of all Christendom? Such a man is capable of rewriting Milton's "Christmas Hymn" in the style of Sternhold and Hopkins.

In our house, however, Christmas has always been a high day, a day whose expectation has held waking all the little eyes in our bird's nest, when as yet there were only little

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ones there, each sleeping with one eye open, hoping to be the happy first to wish the Merry Christmas and grasp the wonderful stocking.

This year our whole family train of married girls and boys, with the various toddling tribes thereto belonging, held high festival around a wonderful Christmas-tree, the getting up and adorning of which had kept my wife and Jenny and myself busy for a week beforehand. If the little folks think these trees grow up in a night, without labor, they know as little about them as they do about most of the other blessings which rain down on their dear little thoughtless heads. Such scrambling and clambering and fussing and tying and untying, such alterations and rearrangements, such agilities in getting up and down and everywhere to tie on tapers and gold balls and glittering things innumerable, to hang airy dolls in graceful positions, to make branches bear stiffly up under loads of pretty things which threaten to make the tapers turn bottom upward!

Part and parcel of all this was I, Christopher, most reckless of rheumatism, most careless of dignity, — the round, bald top of my head to be seen emerging everywhere from the thick boughs of the spruce, now devising an airy settlement for some gossamer-robed doll, now adjusting far back on a stiff branch Tom's new little skates, now balancing bags of sugar-plums and candy, and now combating desperately with some contumacious taper that would turn slantwise or crosswise, or anywise but upward, as a Christian taper should, — regardless of Mrs. Crowfield's gentle admonitions and suggestions, sitting up to most dissipated hours, springing out of bed suddenly to change some arrangement in the middle of the night, and up long before the lazy sun at dawn to execute still other arrangements. If that Christmas-tree had been a fort to be taken, or a campaign to be planned, I could not have spent more time and strength on it. My zeal so far outran even that of sprightly Miss

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Jenny, that she could account for it only by saucily suggesting that papa must be fast getting into his second childhood.

But did n't we have a splendid lighting-up? Did n't I and my youngest grandson, little Tom, head the procession magnificent in paper soldier-caps, blowing tin trumpets and beating drums, as we marched round the twinkling glories of our Christmas-tree, all glittering with red and blue and green tapers, and with a splendid angel on top with great gold wings, the cutting out and adjusting of which had held my eyes waking for nights before? I had had oceans of trouble with that angel, owing to an unlucky sprain in his left wing, which had required constant surgical attention through the week, and which I feared might fall loose again at the important and blissful moment of exhibition: but no, the Fates were in our favor; the angel behaved beautifully, and kept his wings as crisp as possible, and the tapers all burned splendidly, and the little folks were as crazy with delight as my most ardent hopes could have desired; and then we romped and played and frolicked as long as little eyes could keep open, and long after; and so passed away our Christmas.

I had forgotten to speak of the Christmas dinner, that solid feast of fat things, on which we also luxuriated. Mrs. Crowfield outdid all household traditions in that feast: the turkey and the chickens, the jellies and the sauces, the pies and the pudding, behold, are they not written in the tablets of Memory which remain to this day?

The holidays passed away hilariously, and at New Year's, I, according to time-honored custom, went forth to make my calls and see my fair friends, while my wife and daughters stayed at home to dispense the hospitalities of the day to their gentlemen friends. All was merry, cheerful, and it was agreed on all hands that a more joyous holiday season had never flown over us.

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But, somehow, the week after, I began to be sensible of a running-down in the wheels. I had an article to write for the "Atlantic," but felt mopish and could not write. My dinner had not its usual relish, and I had an indefinite sense everywhere of something going wrong. My coal bill came in, and I felt sure we were being extravagant, and that our John Furnace wasted the coal. My grandsons and granddaughters came to see us, and I discovered that they had high-pitched voices, and burst in without wiping their shoes, and it suddenly occurred powerfully to my mind that they were not being well brought up, — evidently, they were growing up rude and noisy. I discovered several tumblers and plates with the edges chipped, and made bitter reflections on the carelessness of Irish servants; — our crockery was going to destruction, along with the rest. Then, on opening one of my paper-drawers, I found that Jenny's one drawer of worsted had overflowed into two or three; Jenny was growing careless; besides, worsted is dear, and girls knit away small fortunes, without knowing it, on little duds that do nobody any good. Moreover, Maggie had three times put my slippers into the hall-closet, instead of leaving them where I wanted, under my study-table. Mrs. Crowfield ought to look after things more; every servant, from end to end of the house, was getting out of the traces; it was strange she did not see it.

All this I vented, from time to time, in short, crusty sayings and doings, as freely as if I had n't just written an article on "Little Foxes" in the last "Atlantic," till at length my eyes were opened on my own state and condition.

It was evening, and I had just laid up the fire in the most approved style of architecture, and projecting my feet into my slippers, sat spitefully cutting the leaves of a caustic review.

Mrs. Crowfield took the tongs and altered the disposition of a stick.

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"My dear," I said, "I do wish you 'd let the fire alone, — you always put it out."

"I was merely admitting a little air between the sticks," said my wife.

"You always make matters worse when you touch the fire."

As if in contradiction, a bright tongue of flame darted up between the sticks, and the fire began chattering and snapping defiance at me. Now, if there 's anything which would provoke a saint, it is to be jeered and snapped at in that way by a man's own fire. It 's an unbearable impertinence. I threw out my leg impatiently, and hit Rover, who yelped a yelp that finished the upset of my nerves. I gave him a hearty kick, that he might have something to yelp for, and in the movement upset Jenny's embroidery-basket.

"Oh, papa!"

"Confound your baskets and balls! they are everywhere, so that a man can't move; useless, wasteful things, too."

"Wasteful?" said Jenny, coloring indignantly; for if there 's anything Jenny piques herself upon, it 's economy.

"Yes, wasteful, — wasting time and money both. Here are hundreds of shivering poor to be clothed, and Christian females sit and do nothing but crochet worsted into useless knickknacks. If they would be working for the poor, there would be some sense in it. But it 's all just alike, no real Christianity in the world, — nothing but organized selfishness and self-indulgence."

"My dear," said Mrs. Crowfield, "you are not well to-night. Things are not quite so desperate as they appear. You have n't got over Christmas week."

"I *am* well. Never was better. But I can see, I hope, what 's before my eyes; and the fact is, Mrs. Crowfield, things must not go on as they are going. There must be more care, more attention to details. There 's Maggie, — that girl never does what she is told. You are too slack with

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her, ma'am. She will light the fire with the last paper, and she won't put my slippers in the right place; and I can't have my study made the general catch-all and menagerie for Rover and Jenny, and her baskets and balls, and for all the family litter."

Just at this moment I overheard a sort of aside from Jenny, who was swelling with repressed indignation at my attack on her worsted. She sat with her back to me, knitting energetically, and said, in a low, but very decisive tone, as she twitched her yarn: —

"Now if *I* should talk in that way, people would call me cross, — and that 's the whole of it."

I pretended to be looking into the fire in an absent-minded state; but Jenny's words had started a new idea. Was that it? Was that the whole matter? Was it, then, a fact, that the house, the servants, Jenny and her worsteds, Rover and Mrs. Crowfield, were all going on pretty much as usual, and that the only difficulty was that I was cross? How many times had I encouraged Rover to lie just where he was lying when I kicked him! How many times, in better moods, had I complimented Jenny on her neat little fancy-works, and declared that I liked the social companionship of ladies' work-baskets among my papers! Yes, it was clear. After all, things were much as they had been; only I was cross.

Cross. I put it to myself in that simple, old-fashioned word, instead of saying that I was out of spirits, or nervous, or using any of the other smooth phrases with which we good Christians cover up our little sins of temper. "Here you are, Christopher," said I to myself, "a literary man, with a somewhat delicate nervous organization and a sensitive stomach, and you have been eating like a sailor or a ploughman; you have been gallivanting and merrymaking and playing the boy for two weeks; up at all sorts of irregular hours and into all sorts of boyish performances;

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and the consequence is, that, like a thoughtless young scapegrace, you have used up in ten days the capital of nervous energy that was meant to last you ten weeks. You can't eat your cake and have it too, Christopher. When the nervous-fluid source of cheerfulness, giver of pleasant sensations and pleasant views, is all spent, you can't feel cheerful; things cannot look as they did when you were full of life and vigor. When the tide is out, there is nothing but unsightly, ill-smelling tide-mud, and you can't help it; but you can keep your senses, — you can know what is the matter with you, — you can keep from visiting your overdose of mince-pies and candies and jocularities on the heads of Mrs. Crowfield, Rover, and Jenny, whether in the form of virulent morality, pungent criticisms, or a free kick, such as you just gave the poor brute."

"Come here, Rover, poor dog!" said I, extending my hand to Rover, who cowered at the farther corner of the room, eying me wistfully, — "come here, you poor doggie, and make up with your master. There, there! Was his master cross? Well, he knows it. We must forgive and forget, old boy, must n't we?" And Rover nearly broke his own back and tore me to pieces with his tumultuous tail-waggings.

"As for you, puss," I said to Jenny, "I am much obliged to you for your free suggestion. You must take my cynical moralities for what they are worth, and put your little traps into as many of my drawers as you like."

In short, I made it up handsomely all around, — even apologizing to Mrs. Crowfield, who, by the bye, has summered and wintered me so many years, and knows all my little seams and crinkles so well, that she took my irritable, unreasonable spirit as tranquilly as if I had been a baby cutting a new tooth.

"Of course, Chris, I knew what the matter was; don't disturb yourself," she said, as I began my apology; "we

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understand each other. But there is one thing I have to say, and that is, that your article ought to be ready."

"Ah, well, then," said I, "like other great writers, I shall make capital of my own sins, and treat of the second little family fox."

IRRITABILITY

Irritability is, more than most unlovely states, a sin of the flesh. It is not, like envy, malice, spite, revenge, a vice which we may suppose to belong equally to an embodied or a disembodied spirit. In fact, it comes nearer to being physical depravity than anything I know of. There are some bodily states, some conditions of the nerves, such that we could not conceive of even an angelic spirit confined in a body thus disordered as being able to do any more than simply endure. It is a state of nervous torture; and the attacks which the wretched victim makes on others are as much a result of disease as the snapping and biting of a patient convulsed with hydrophobia.

Then, again, there are other people who go through life loving and beloved, desired in every circle, held up in the Church as examples of the power of religion, who, after all, deserve no credit for these things. Their spirits are lodged in an animal nature so tranquil, so cheerful, all the sensations which come to them are so fresh and vigorous and pleasant, that they cannot help viewing the world charitably and seeing everything through a glorified medium. The ill temper of others does not provoke them; perplexing business never sets their nerves to vibrating; and all their lives long they walk in the serene sunshine of perfect animal health.

Look at Rover there. He is never nervous, never cross, never snaps or snarls, and is ready, the moment after the grossest affront, to wag the tail of forgiveness, — all because kind nature has put his dog's body together so that

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it always works harmoniously. If every person in the world were gifted with a stomach and nerves like his, it would be a far better and happier world, no doubt. The man said a good thing who made the remark, that the foundation of all intellectual and moral worth must be laid in a good healthy animal.

Now I think it is undeniable that the peace and happiness of the home circle are very generally much invaded by the recurrence in its members of these states of bodily irritability. Every person, if he thinks the matter over, will see that his condition in life, the character of his friends, his estimate of their virtues and failings, his hopes and expectations, are all very much modified by these things. Cannot we all remember going to bed as very ill-used, persecuted individuals, all whose friends were unreasonable, whose life was full of trials and crosses, and waking up on a bright bird-singing morning to find all these illusions gone with the fogs of the night? Our friends are nice people, after all; the little things that annoyed us look ridiculous by bright sunshine; and we are fortunate individuals.

The philosophy of life, then, as far as this matter is concerned, must consist of two things: first, to keep ourselves out of irritable bodily states; and second, to understand and control these states, when we cannot ward them off.

Of course, the first of these is the most important; and yet, of all things, it seems to be least looked into and understood. We find abundant rules for the government of the tongue and temper; it is a slough into which, John Bunyan hath it, cart-loads of wholesome instructions have been thrown; but how to get and keep that healthy state of brain, stomach, and nerves which takes away the temptation to ill temper and anger is a subject which moral and religious teachers seem scarcely to touch upon.

Now, without running into technical, physiological language, it is evident, as regards us human beings, that there

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is a power by which we live and move and have our being, — by which the brain thinks and wills, the stomach digests, the blood circulates, and all the different provinces of the little man-kingdom do their work. This something — call it nervous fluid, nervous power, vital energy, life-force, or anything else that you will — is a perfectly understood, if not a definable thing. It is plain, too, that people possess this force in very different degrees; some generating it as a high pressure engine does steam, and using it constantly, with an apparently inexhaustible flow; and others who have little, and spend it quickly. We have a common saying, that this or that person is soon used up. Now most nervous irritable states of temper are the mere physical result of a used-up condition. The person has overspent his nervous energy, — like a man who should eat up on Monday the whole food which was to keep him for a week, and go growling and faint through the other days; or the quantity of nervous force which was wanted to carry on the whole system in all its parts is seized on by some one monopolizing portion, and used up to the loss and detriment of the rest. Thus, with men of letters, an exorbitant brain expends on its own workings what belongs to the other offices of the body: the stomach has nothing to carry on digestion; the secretions are badly made; and the imperfectly assimilated nourishment, that is conveyed to every little nerve and tissue, carries with it an acrid, irritating quality, producing general restlessness and discomfort. So men and women go struggling on through their threescore and ten years, scarcely one in a thousand knowing through life that perfect balance of parts, that appropriate harmony of energies, that make a healthy, kindly animal condition, predisposing to cheerfulness and good-will.

We Americans are, in the first place, a nervous, excitable people. Multitudes of children, probably the great majority in the upper walks of life, are born into the world with

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weaknesses of the nervous organization, or of the brain or stomach, which make them incapable of any strong excitement or prolonged exertion without some lesion or derangement; so that they are continually being checked, laid up, and made invalids in the midst of their days. Life here in America is so fervid, so fast, our climate is so stimulating, with its clear, bright skies, its rapid and sudden changes of temperature, that the tendencies to nervous disease are constantly aggravated.

Under these circumstances, unless men and women make a conscience, a religion, of saving and sparing something of themselves expressly for home life and home consumption, it must follow that home will often be merely a sort of refuge for us to creep into when we are used up and irritable.

Papa is up and off, after a hasty breakfast, and drives all day in his business, putting into it all there is in him, letting it drink up brain and nerve and body and soul, and coming home jaded and exhausted, so that he cannot bear the cry of the baby, and the frolics and pattering of the nursery seem horrid and needless confusion. The little ones say, in their plain vernacular, "Papa is cross."

Mamma goes out to a party that keeps her up till one or two in the morning, breathes bad air, eats indigestible food, and the next day is so nervous that every straw and thread in her domestic path are insufferable.

Papas that pursue business thus day after day, and mammas that go into company, as it is called, night after night, what is there left in or of them to make an agreeable fireside with, to brighten their home and inspire their children?

True, the man says he cannot help himself, — business requires it. But what is the need of rolling up money at the rate at which he is seeking to do it? Why not have less, and take some time to enjoy his home, and cheer up his wife, and form the minds of his children? Why

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spend himself down to the last drop on the world, and give to the dearest friends he has only the bitter dregs?

Much of the preaching which the pulpit and the Church have leveled at fashionable amusements has failed of any effect at all, because wrongly put. A cannonade has been opened upon dancing, for example, and all for reasons that will not, in the least, bear looking into. It is vain to talk of dancing as a sin because practiced in a dying world where souls are passing into eternity. If dancing is a sin for this reason, so is playing marbles, or frolicking with one's children, or enjoying a good dinner, or doing fifty other things which nobody ever dreamed of objecting to.

If the preacher were to say that anything is a sin which uses up the strength we need for daily duties, and leaves us fagged out and irritable at just those times and in just those places when and where we need most to be healthy, cheerful, and self-possessed, he would say a thing that none of his hearers would dispute. If he should add, that dancing-parties, beginning at ten o'clock at night and ending at four o'clock in the morning, do use up the strength, weaken the nerves, and leave a person wholly unfit for any home duty, he would also be saying what very few people would deny; and then his case would be made out. If he should say that it is wrong to breathe bad air and fill the stomach with unwholesome dainties, so as to make one restless, ill natured, and irritable for days, he would also say what few would deny, and his preaching might have some hope of success.

The true manner of judging of the worth of amusements is to try them by their effects on the nerves and spirits the day after. True amusement ought to be, as the word indicates, *recreation*, — something that refreshes, turns us out anew, rests the mind and body by change, and gives cheerfulness and alacrity to our return to duty.

The true objection to all stimulants, alcoholic and nar-

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cotic, consists simply in this, — that they are a form of overdraft on the nervous energy, which helps us to use up in one hour the strength of whole days.

A man uses up all the fair, legal interest of nervous power by too much business, too much care, or too much amusement. He has now a demand to meet. He has a complicated account to make up, an essay or a sermon to write, and he primes himself by a cup of coffee, a cigar, a glass of spirits. This is exactly the procedure of a man who, having used the interest of his money, begins to dip into the principal. The strength a man gets in this way is just so much taken out of his life-blood; it is borrowing of a merciless creditor, who will exact, in time, the pound of flesh nearest his heart.

Much of the irritability which spoils home happiness is the letting-down from the over-excitement of stimulus. Some will drink coffee, when they own every day that it makes them nervous; some will drug themselves with tobacco, and some with alcohol, and, for a few hours of extra brightness, give themselves and their friends many hours when amiability or agreeableness is quite out of the question. There are people calling themselves Christians who live in miserable thraldom, forever in debt to Nature, forever overdrawing on their just resources, and using up their patrimony, because they have not the moral courage to break away from a miserable appetite.

The same may be said of numberless indulgences of the palate, which tax the stomach beyond its power, and bring on all the horrors of indigestion. It is almost impossible for a confirmed dyspeptic to act like a good Christian; but a good Christian ought not to become a confirmed dyspeptic. Reasonable self-control, abstaining from all unseasonable indulgence, may prevent or put an end to dyspepsia, and many suffer and make their friends suffer only because they will persist in eating what they know is hurtful to them.

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But it is not merely in worldly business, or fashionable amusements, or the gratification of appetite, that people are tempted to overdraw and use up in advance their life-force. It is done in ways more insidious, because connected with our moral and religious faculties. There are religious exaltations beyond the regular pulse and beatings of ordinary nature, that quite as surely gravitate downward into the mire of irritability. The ascent to the third heaven lets even the Apostle down to a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him.

It is the temptation of natures in which the moral faculties predominate to overdo in the outward expression and activities of religion till they are used up and irritable, and have no strength left to set a good example in domestic life.

The Reverend Mr. X. in the pulpit to-day appears with the face of an angel; he soars away into those regions of exalted devotion where his people can but faintly gaze after him; he tells them of the victory that overcometh the world, of an unmoved faith that fears no evil, of a serenity of love that no outward event can ruffle; and all look after him and wonder, and wish they could so soar.

Alas! the exaltation which inspires these sublime conceptions, these celestial ecstasies, is a double and treble draft on nature, — and poor Mrs. X. knows, when she hears him preaching, that days of miserable reaction are before her. He had been a fortnight driving before a gale of strong excitement, doing all the time twice or thrice as much as in his ordinary state he could, and sustaining himself by the stimulus of strong coffee. He has preached or exhorted every night, and conversed with religious inquirers every day, seeming to himself to become stronger and stronger, because every day more and more excitable and excited. To his hearers, with his flushed sunken cheek and his glittering eye, he looks like some spiritual being just trembling on his flight for upper worlds; but to poor Mrs.

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X., whose husband he is, things wear a very different aspect. Her woman and mother instincts tell her that he is drawing on his life-capital with both hands, and that the hours of a terrible settlement must come, and the days of darkness will be many. He who spoke so beautifully of the peace of a soul made perfect will not be able to bear the cry of his baby or the pattering feet of any of the poor little X.'s, who must be sent

"Anywhere, anywhere,
Out of his sight;"

he who discoursed so devoutly of perfect trust in God will be nervous about the butcher's bill, sure of going to ruin because both ends of the salary don't meet; and he who could so admiringly tell of the silence of Jesus under provocation will but too often speak unadvisedly with his lips. Poor Mr. X. will be morally insane for days or weeks, and absolutely incapable of preaching Christ in the way that is the most effective, by setting Him forth in his own daily example.

What then? must we not do the work of the Lord? Yes, certainly; but the first work of the Lord, that for which provision is to be made in the first place, is to set a good example as a Christian man. Better labor for years steadily, diligently, doing every day only what the night's rest can repair, avoiding those cheating stimulants that overtax Nature, and illustrating the sayings of the pulpit by the daily life in the family, than to pass life in exaltations and depressions, resulting from overstrained labors, supported by unnatural stimulus.

The same principles apply to hearers as to preachers. Religious services must be judged of like amusements, by their effect on the life. If an overdose of prayers, hymns, and sermons leaves us tired, nervous, and cross, it is only not quite as bad as an overdose of fashionable folly.

It could be wished that in every neighborhood there

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might be one or two calm, sweet daily services which should morning and evening unite for a few solemn moments the hearts of all as in one family, and feed with a constant, unnoticed, daily supply the lamp of faith and love. Such are some of the daily prayer-meetings which for eight or ten years past have held their even tenor in some of our New England cities, and such the morning and evening services which we are glad to see obtaining in the Episcopal churches. Everything which brings religion into habitual contact with life, and makes it part of a healthy, cheerful average living, we hail as a sign of a better day. Nothing is so good for health as daily devotion. It is the best soother of the nerves, the best antidote to care; and we trust erelong that all Christian people will be of one mind in this, and that neighborhoods will be families gathering daily around one altar, praying not for themselves merely, but for each other.

The conclusion of the whole matter is this. Set apart some provision to make merry with *at home*, and guard that reserve as religiously as the priests guarded the shew-bread in the temple. However great you are, however good, however wide the general interests that you may control, you gain nothing by neglecting home duties. You must leave enough of yourself to be able to bear and forbear, give and forgive, and be a source of life and cheerfulness around the hearthstone. The great sign given by the Prophets of the coming of the Millennium is, — what do you suppose? — "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Thus much on avoiding unhealthy, irritable states.

But it still remains that a large number of people will be subject to them unavoidably for these reasons.

First. The use of tobacco, alcohol, and other kindred stimulants, for so many generations, has vitiated the brain

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and nervous system of modern civilized races so that it is not what it was in former times. Michelet treats of this subject quite at large in some of his late works; and we have to face the fact of a generation born with an impaired nervous organization, who will need constant care and wisdom to avoid unhealthy, morbid irritation.

There is a temperament called the HYPOCHONDRIAC, to which many persons, some of them the brightest, the most interesting, the most gifted, are born heirs, — a want of balance of the nervous powers, which tends constantly to periods of high excitement and of consequent depression, — an unfortunate inheritance for the possessor, though accompanied often with the greatest talents. Sometimes, too, it is the unfortunate lot of those who have not talents, who bear its burdens and its anguish without its rewards.

People of this temperament are subject to fits of gloom and despondency, of nervous irritability and suffering, which darken the aspect of the whole world to them, which present lying reports of their friends, of themselves, of the circumstances of their life, and of all with which they have to do.

Now the highest philosophy for persons thus afflicted is to understand themselves and their tendencies, to know that these fits of gloom and depression are just as much a form of disease as a fever or a toothache, to know that it is the peculiarity of the disease to fill the mind with wretched illusions, to make them seem miserable and unlovely to themselves, to make their nearest friends seem unjust and unkind, to make all events appear to be going wrong and tending to destruction and ruin.

The evils and burdens of such a temperament are half removed when a man once knows that he has it and recognizes it for a disease, and when he does not trust himself to speak and act in those bitter hours as if there were any truth in what he thinks and feels and sees. He who has

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not attained to this wisdom overwhelms his friends and his family with the waters of bitterness; he stings with unjust accusations, and makes his fireside dreadful with fancies which are real to him, but false as the ravings of fever.

A sensible person, thus diseased, who has found out what ails him, will shut his mouth resolutely, not to give utterance to the dark thoughts that infest his soul.

A lady of great brilliancy and wit, who was subject to these periods, once said to me, "My dear sir, there are times when I know I am possessed of the Devil, and then I never let myself speak." And so this wise woman carried her burden about with her in a determined, cheerful reticence, leaving always the impression of a cheery, kindly temper, when, if she had spoken out a tithe of what she thought and felt in her morbid hours, she would have driven all her friends from her, and made others as miserable as she was herself. She was a sunbeam, a life-giving presence in every family, by the power of self-knowledge and self-control. Such victories as this are the victories of real saints.

But if the victim of these glooms is once tempted to lift their heavy load by the use of any stimulus whatever, he or she is a lost man or woman. It is from this sad class more than any other that the vast army of drunkards and opium-eaters is recruited. Dr. Johnson, one of the most brilliant examples of the hypochondriac temperament which literature affords, has expressed a characteristic of the race, in what he says of himself, that he could "practice Abstinence but not Temperance." Hypochondriacs who begin to rely on stimulus almost without exception find this to be true. They cannot, they will not be moderate. Whatever stimulant they take for relief will create an uncontrollable appetite, a burning passion. The temperament itself lies in the direction of insanity. It needs the most healthful, careful, even regimen and management to keep it within the bounds of soundness; but the introduction of

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stimulants deepens its gloom with the shadows of utter despair.

All parents, in the education of their children, should look out for and understand the signs of this temperament. It appears in early childhood; and a child inclined to fits of depression should be marked as a subject of the most thoughtful, painstaking physical and moral training. All over-excitement and stimulus should be carefully avoided, whether in the way of study, amusement, or diet. Judicious education may do much to mitigate the unavoidable pains and penalties of this most undesirable inheritance.

The second class of persons who need wisdom in the control of their moods is that large class whose unfortunate circumstances make it impossible for them to avoid constantly overdoing and overdrawing upon their nervous energies, and who therefore are always exhausted and worn out. Poor souls, who labor daily under a burden too heavy for them, and whose fretfulness and impatience are looked upon with sorrow, not anger, by pitying angels. Poor mothers, with families of little children clinging round them, and a baby that never lets them sleep; hard-working men, whose utmost toil, day and night, scarcely keeps the wolf from the door; and all the hard-laboring, heavy-laden, on whom the burdens of life press far beyond their strength.

There are but two things we know of for these, — two remedies only for the irritation that comes of these exhaustions; the habit of silence towards men, and of speech towards God. The heart must utter itself or burst; but let it learn to commune constantly and intimately with One always present and always sympathizing. This is the great, the only safeguard against fretfulness and complaint. Thus and thus only can peace spring out of confusion, and the breaking chords of an overtaxed nature be strung anew to a celestial harmony.

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III

REPRESSION

I AM going now to write on another cause of family unhappiness, more subtle than either of those before enumerated.

In the General Confession of the Church, we poor mortals all unite in saying two things: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done." These two heads exhaust the subject of human frailty.

It is the things left undone which we ought to have done, the things left unsaid which we ought to have said, that constitute the subject I am now to treat of.

I remember my school-day speculations over an *old* Chemistry I used to study as a text-book, which informed me that a substance called Caloric exists in all bodies. In some it exists in a latent state: it is there, but it affects neither the senses nor the thermometer. Certain causes develop it, when it raises the mercury and warms the hands. I remember the awe and wonder with which, even then, I reflected on the vast amount of blind, deaf, and dumb comfort which Nature has thus stowed away. How mysterious it seemed to me that poor families every winter should be shivering, freezing, and catching cold, when Nature had all this latent caloric locked up in her store-closet, — when it was all around them, in everything they touched and handled!

In the spiritual world there is an exact analogy to this. There is a great life-giving, warming power called Love, which exists in human hearts dumb and unseen, but which

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has no real life, no warming power, till set free by expression.

Did you ever, in a raw, chilly day, just before a snow-storm, sit at work in a room that was judiciously warmed by an exact thermometer? You do not freeze, but you shiver; your fingers do not become numb with cold, but you have all the while an uneasy craving for more positive warmth. You look at the empty grate, walk mechanically towards it, and, suddenly awaking, shiver to see that there is nothing there. You long for a shawl or cloak; you draw yourself within yourself; you consult the thermometer, and are vexed to find that there is nothing there to be complained of, — it is standing most provokingly at the exact temperature that all the good books and good doctors pronounce to be the proper thing, — the golden mean of health; and yet perversely you shiver, and feel as if the face of an open fire would be to you as the smile of an angel.

Such a lifelong chill, such an habitual shiver, is the lot of many natures, which are not warm, when all ordinary rules tell them they ought to be warm, — whose life is cold and barren and meagre, — which never see the blaze of an open fire.

I will illustrate my meaning by a page out of my own experience.

I was twenty-one when I stood as groomsman for my youngest and favorite sister Emily. I remember her now as she stood at the altar, — a pale, sweet, flowery face, in a half-shimmer between smiles and tears, looking out of vapory clouds of gauze and curls and all the vanishing mysteries of a bridal morning.

Everybody thought the marriage such a fortunate one! — for her husband was handsome and manly, a man of worth, of principle good as gold and solid as adamant, — and Emmy had always been such a flossy little kitten of a pet, so full of all sorts of impulses, so sensitive and nervous, we thought

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her kind, strong, composed, stately husband made just on purpose for her. "It was quite a Providence," sighed all the elderly ladies, who sniffed tenderly, and wiped their eyes, according to approved custom, during the marriage ceremony.

I remember now the bustle of the day, — the confused whirl of white gloves, kisses, bridemaids, and bridecakes, the losing of trunk keys and breaking of lacings, the tears of mamma — God bless her! — and the jokes of irreverent Christopher, who could for the life of him see nothing so very dismal in the whole phantasmagoria, and only wished he were as well off himself.

And so Emmy was whirled away from us on the bridal tour, when her letters came back to us almost every day, just like herself, merry, frisky little bits of scratches, — as full of little nonsense-beads as a glass of champagne, and all ending with telling us how perfect he was, and how good, and how well he took care of her, and how happy, etc., etc. Then came letters from her new home. *His* house was not yet built; but while it was building, they were to live with his mother, who was "such a good woman," and his sisters, who were also "such nice women."

But somehow, after this, a change came over Emmy's letters. They grew shorter; they seemed measured in their words; and in place of sparkling nonsense and bubbling outbursts of glee, came anxiously worded praises of her situation and surroundings, evidently written for the sake of arguing herself into the belief that she was extremely happy.

John, of course, was not as much with her now: he had his business to attend to, which took him away all day, and at night he was very tired. Still he was very good and thoughtful of her, and how thankful she ought to be! And his mother was very good indeed, and did all for her that she could reasonably expect, — of course she could not

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be like her own mamma; and Mary and Jane were very kind, — "in their way," she wrote, but scratched it out, and wrote over it, "very kind indeed." They were the best people in the world, — a great deal better than she was; and she should try to learn a great deal from them.

"Poor little Em!" I said to myself, "I am afraid these very nice people are slowly freezing and starving her." And so, as I was going up into the mountains for a summer tour, I thought I would accept some of John's many invitations and stop a day or two with them on my way, and see how matters stood. John had been known among us in college as a taciturn fellow, but good as gold. I had gained his friendship by a regular siege, carrying parallel after parallel, till, when I came into the fort at last, I found the treasures worth taking.

I had little difficulty in finding Squire Evans's house. It was *the* house of the village, — a true, model, New England house, — a square, roomy, old-fashioned mansion, which stood on a hillside, under a group of great, breezy old elms, whose wide, wind-swung arms arched over it like a leafy firmament. Under this bower the substantial white house, with all its window blinds closed, with its neat white fences all tight and trim, stood in its faultless green turfy yard, a perfect Pharisee among houses. It looked like a house all finished, done, completed, labeled, and set on a shelf for preservation; but, as is usual with this kind of edifice in our dear New England, it had not the slightest appearance of being lived in, — not a door or window open, not a wink or blink of life; the only suspicion of human habitation was the thin, pale-blue smoke from the kitchen-chimney.

And now for the people in the house.

In making a New England visit in winter, was it ever your fortune to be put to sleep in the glacial spare-chamber, that had been kept from time immemorial as a refrigerator for guests, — that room which no ray of daily sunshine

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and daily living ever warms, whose blinds are closed the whole year round, whose fireplace knows only the complimentary blaze which is kindled a few moments before bedtime in an atmosphere where you can see your breath? Do you remember the process of getting warm in a bed of most faultless material, with linen sheets and pillow-cases, slippery and cold as ice? You did get warm at last, but you warmed your bed by giving out all the heat of your own body.

Such are some families where you visit. They are of the very best quality, like your sheets, but so cold that it takes all the vitality you have to get them warmed up to the talking-point. You think, the first hour after your arrival, that they must have heard some report to your disadvantage, or that you misunderstood your letter of invitation, or that you came on the wrong day; but no, you find in due course that you were invited, you were expected, and they are doing for you the best they know how, and treating you as they suppose a guest ought to be treated.

If you are a warm-hearted, jovial fellow, and go on feeling your way discreetly, you gradually thaw quite a little place round yourself in the domestic circle, till, by the time you are ready to leave, you really begin to think it is agreeable to stay, and resolve that you will come again. They are nice people; they like you; at last you have got to feeling at home with them.

Three months after, you go to see them again, when, lo! there you are, back again just where you were at first. The little spot which you had thawed out is frozen over again, and again you spend all your visit in thawing it and getting your hosts limbered and in a state for comfortable converse.

The first evening that I spent in the wide, roomy front-parlor, with Judge Evans, his wife, and daughters, fully accounted for the change in Emmy's letters. Rooms, I verily believe, get saturated with the aroma of their spirit-

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ual atmosphere; and there are some so stately, so correct, that they would paralyze even the friskiest kitten or the most impudent Scotch terrier. At a glance you perceive, on entering, that nothing but correct deportment, an erect posture, and strictly didactic conversation is possible there.

The family, in fact, were all eminently didactic, bent on improvement, laboriously useful. Not a good work or charitable enterprise could put forth its head in the neighborhood, of which they were not the support and life. Judge Evans was the stay and staff of the village and township of ——; he bore up the pillars thereof. Mrs. Evans was known in the gates for all the properties and deeds of the virtuous woman, as set forth by Solomon; the heart of her husband did safely trust in her. But when I saw them, that evening, sitting, in erect propriety, in their respective corners each side of the great, stately fireplace, with its tall, glistening brass andirons, its mantel adorned at either end with plated candlesticks, with the snuffer-tray in the middle, — she so collectedly measuring her words, talking in all those well-worn grooves of correct conversation which are designed, as the phrase goes, to "entertain strangers," and the Misses Evans, in the best of grammar and rhetoric, and in most proper time and way possible, showing themselves for what they were, most high-principled, well-informed, intelligent women, — I set myself to speculate on the cause of the extraordinary sensation of stiffness and restraint which pervaded me, as if I had been dipped in some petrifying spring and was beginning to feel myself slightly crusting over on the exterior.

This kind of conversation is such as admits quite easily of one's carrying on another course of thought within; and so, as I found myself like a machine, striking in now and then in good time and tune, I looked at Judge Evans, sitting there so serene, self-poised, and cold, and began to wonder if he had ever been a boy, a young man, — if Mrs.

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Evans ever was a girl, — if he was ever in love with her, and what he did when he was.

I thought of the lock of Emmy's hair which I had observed in John's writing-desk in days when he was falling in love with her, — of sundry little movements in which at awkward moments I had detected my grave and serious gentleman when I had stumbled accidentally upon the pair in moonlight strolls or retired corners, — and wondered whether the models of propriety before me had ever been convicted of any such human weaknesses. Now, to be sure, I could as soon imagine the stately tongs to walk up and kiss the shovel as conceive of any such bygone effusion in those dignified individuals. But how did they get acquainted? how came they ever to be married?

I looked at John, and thought I saw him gradually stiffening and subsiding into the very image of his father. As near as a young fellow of twenty-five can resemble an old one of sixty-two, he was growing to be exactly like him, with the same upright carriage, the same silence and reserve. Then I looked at Emmy: she, too, was changed, — she, the wild little pet, all of whose pretty individualities were dear to us, — that little unpunctuated scrap of life's poetry, full of little exceptions referable to no exact rule, only to be tolerated under the wide score of poetic license. Now, as she sat between the two Misses Evans, I thought I could detect a bored, anxious expression on her little mobile face, — an involuntary watchfulness and self-consciousness, as if she were trying to be good on some quite new pattern. She seemed nervous about some of my jokes, and her eye went apprehensively to her mother-in-law in the corner; she tried hard to laugh and make things go merrily for me; she seemed sometimes to look an apology for me to them, and then again for them to me. For myself, I felt that perverse inclination to shock people which sometimes comes over one in such situations. I had a great mind to draw

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Emmy on to my knee and commence a brotherly romp with her, to give John a thump on his very upright back, and to propose to one of the Misses Evans to strike up a waltz, and get the parlor into a general whirl, before the very face and eyes of propriety in the corner: but "the spirits" were too strong for me; I could n't do it.

I remembered the innocent, saucy freedom with which Emmy used to treat her John in the days of their engagement, — the little ways, half loving, half mischievous, in which she alternately petted and domineered over him. Now she called him "Mr. Evans," with an anxious affectation of matronly gravity. Had they been lecturing her into these conjugal proprieties? Probably not. I felt sure, by what I now experienced in myself, that, were I to live in that family one week, all deviations from the one accepted pattern of propriety would fall off, like many-colored sumach leaves after the first hard frost. I began to feel myself slowly stiffening, my courage getting gently chilly. I tried to tell a story, but had to mangle it greatly, because I felt in the air around me that parts of it were too vernacular and emphatic; and then, as a man who is freezing makes desperate efforts to throw off the spell, and finds his brain beginning to turn, so I was beginning to be slightly insane, and was haunted with a desire to say some horribly improper or wicked thing which should start them all out of their chairs. Though never given to profane expressions, I perfectly hankered to let out a certain round, unvarnished, wicked word, which I knew would create a tremendous commotion on the surface of this enchanted mill-pond, — in fact, I was so afraid that I should make some such mad demonstration, that I rose at an early hour and begged leave to retire. Emmy sprang up with apparent relief, and offered to get my candle and marshal me to my room.

When she had ushered me into the chilly hospitality of that stately apartment, she seemed suddenly disenchanted.

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She set down the candle, ran to me, fell on my neck, nestled her little head under my coat, laughing and crying, and calling me her dear old boy; she pulled my whiskers, pinched my ear, rummaged my pockets, danced round me in a sort of wild joy, stunning me with a volley of questions, without stopping to hear the answer to one of them; in short, the wild little elf of old days seemed suddenly to come back to me, as I sat down and drew her on to my knee.

"It does look so like home to see you, Chris! — dear, dear home! — and the dear old folks! There never, never was such a home! — everybody there did just what they wanted to, did n't they, Chris? — and we love each other, don't we?"

"Emmy," said I, suddenly, and very improperly, "you are n't happy here."

"Not happy?" she said, with a half-frightened look, — "what makes you say so? Oh, you are mistaken. I have everything to make me happy. I should be very unreasonable and wicked, if I were not. I am very, very happy, I assure you. Of course, you know, everybody can't be like our folks at home. That I should not expect, you know, — people's ways are different, — but then, when you know people are so good, and all that, why, of course you must be thankful, be happy. It 's better for me to learn to control my feelings, you know, and not give way to impulses. They are all so good here, they never give way to their feelings, — they always do right. Oh, they are quite wonderful!"

"And agreeable?" said I.

"O Chris, we must n't think so much of that. They certainly are n't pleasant and easy, as people at home are; but they are never cross, they never scold, they always are good. And we ought n't to think so much of living to be happy; we ought to think more of doing right, doing our duty, don't you think so?"

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"All undeniable truth, Emmy; but, for all that, John seems stiff as a ramrod, and their front-parlor is like a tomb. You must n't let them petrify him."

Her face clouded over a little.

"John is different here from what he was at our house. He has been brought up differently, — oh, entirely differently from what we were; and when he comes back into the old house, the old business, and the old place between his father and mother and sisters, he goes back into the old ways. He loves me all the same, but he does not show it in the same ways, and I must learn, you know, to take it on trust. He is very busy, — works hard all day, and all for me; and mother says women are unreasonable that ask any other proof of love from their husbands than what they give by working for them all the time. She never lectures me, but I know she thought I was a silly little petted child, and she told me one day how she brought up John. She never petted him; she put him away alone to sleep, from the time he was six months old; she never fed him out of his regular hours when he was a baby, no matter how much he cried; she never let him talk baby-talk, or have any baby-talk talked to him, but was very careful to make him speak all his words plain from the very first; she never encouraged him to express his love by kisses or caresses, but taught him that the only proof of love was exact obedience. I remember John's telling me of his running to her once and hugging her round the neck, when he had come in without wiping his shoes, and she took off his arms and said: 'My son, this is n't the best way to show love. I should be much better pleased to have you come in quietly and wipe your shoes than to come and kiss me when you forget to do what I say.'"

"Dreadful old jade!" said I, irreverently, being then only twenty-three.

"Now, Chris, I won't have anything to say to you, if

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this is the way you are going to talk," said Emily, pouting, though a mischievous gleam darted into her eyes. "Really, however, I think she carried things too far, though she is so good. I only said it to excuse John, and show how he was brought up."

"Poor fellow!" said I. "I know now why he is so hopelessly shut up, and walled up. Never a warmer heart than he keeps stowed away there inside of the fortress, with the drawbridge down and moat all round."

"They are all warm-hearted inside," said Emily. "Would you think she did n't love him? Once when he was sick, she watched with him seventeen nights without taking off her clothes; she scarcely would eat all the time: Jane told me so. She loves him better than she loves herself. It 's perfectly dreadful sometimes to see how intense she is when anything concerns him; it 's her principle that makes her so cold and quiet."

"And a devilish one it is!" said I.

"Chris, you are really growing wicked!"

"I use the word seriously, and in good faith," said I. "Who but the Father of Evil ever devised such plans for making goodness hateful, and keeping the most heavenly part of our nature so under lock and key that for the greater part of our lives we get no use of it? Of what benefit is a mine of love burning where it warms nobody, and does nothing but blister the soul within with its imprisoned heat? Love repressed grows morbid, acts in a thousand perverse ways. These three women, I 'll venture to say, are living in the family here like three frozen islands, knowing as little of each other's inner life as if parted by eternal barriers of ice, — and all because a cursed principle in the heart of the mother has made her bring them up in violence to nature."

"Well," said Emmy, "sometimes I do pity Jane; she is nearest my age, and, naturally, I think she was something like me, or might have been. The other day I remember

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her coming in looking so flushed and ill that I could n't help asking if she were unwell. The tears came into her eyes; but her mother looked up, in her cool, business-like way, and said, in her dry voice, —

"'Jane, what 's the matter?'

"'Oh, my head aches dreadfully, and I have pains in all my limbs!'

"I wanted to jump and run to do something for her, — you know at our house we feel that a sick person must be waited on, — but her mother only said, in the same dry way, —

"'Well, Jane, you 've probably got a cold; go into the kitchen and make yourself some good boneset tea, soak your feet in hot water, and go to bed at once;" and Jane meekly departed.

"I wanted to spring and do these things for her; but it 's curious, in this house I never dare offer to do anything; and mother looked at me, as she went out, with a significant nod, —

"'That 's always *my* way; if any of the children are sick, I never coddle them; it 's best to teach them to make as light of it as possible.'"

"Dreadful!" said I.

"Yes, it is dreadful," said Emmy, drawing her breath, as if relieved that she might speak her mind; "it 's dreadful to see these people, who I know love each other, living side by side and never saying a loving, tender word, never doing a little loving thing, — sick ones crawling off alone like sick animals, persisting in being alone, bearing everything alone. But I won't let them; I will insist on forcing my way into their rooms. I would go and sit with Jane, and pet her and hold her hand and bathe her head, though I knew it made her horridly uncomfortable at first; but I thought she ought to learn to be petted in a Christian way, when she was sick. I will kiss her too, sometimes, though she takes

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it just like a cat that is n't used to being stroked, and calls me a silly girl; but I know she is getting to like it. What is the use of people's loving each other in this horridly cold, stingy, silent way? If one of them were dangerously ill now, or met with any serious accident, I know there would be no end to what the others would do for her; if one of them were to die, the others would be perfectly crushed: but it would all go inward, — drop silently down into that dark, cold, frozen well; they could n't speak to each other; they could n't comfort each other; they have lost the power of expression; they absolutely can't."

"Yes," said I, "they are like the fakirs who have held up an arm till it has become stiffened, — they cannot now change its position; like the poor mutes, who, being deaf, have become dumb through disuse of the organs of speech. Their education has been like those iron suits of armor into which little boys were put in the Middle Ages, solid, inflexible, put on in childhood, enlarged with every year's growth, till the warm human frame fitted the *mould* as if it had been melted and poured into it. A person educated in this way is hopelessly crippled, never will be what he might have been."

"Oh, don't say that, Chris; think of John; think how good he is."

"I do think how good he is," — with indignation, — "and how few know it, too. I think, that, with the tenderest, truest, gentlest heart, the utmost appreciation of human friendship, he has passed in the world for a cold, proud, selfish man. If your frank, impulsive, incisive nature had not unlocked gates and opened doors, he would never have known the love of woman: and now he is but half disenchanted; he every day tends to go back to stone."

"But I sha'n't let him; oh, indeed, I know the danger! I shall bring him out. I shall work on them all. I know they are beginning to love me a good deal: in the first

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place, because I belong to John, and everything belonging to him is perfect; and in the second place" —

"In the second place, because they expect to weave, day after day, the fine cobweb lines of their cold system of repression around you, which will harden and harden, and tighten and tighten, till you are as stiff and shrouded as any of them. You remind me of our poor little duck: don't you remember him!"

"Yes, poor fellow! how he would stay out, and swim round and round, while the pond kept freezing and freezing, and his swimming-place grew smaller and smaller every day; but he was such a plucky little fellow that" —

"That at last we found him one morning frozen tight in, and he has limped ever since on his poor feet."

"Oh, but I won't freeze in," she said laughing.

"Take care, Emmy! You are sensitive, approbative, delicately organized; your whole nature inclines you to give way and yield to the nature of those around you. One little lone duck such as you, however warm-blooded, light-hearted, cannot keep a whole pond from freezing. While you have any influence, you must use it all to get John away from these surroundings, where you can have him to yourself."

"Oh, you know we are building our house; we shall go to housekeeping soon."

"Where? Close by, under the very guns of this fortress, where all your housekeeping, all your little management, will be subject to daily inspection."

"But mamma never interferes, never advises, — unless I ask advice."

"No, but she influences; she lives, she looks, she is there; and while she is there, and while your home is within a stone's throw, the old spell will be on your husband, on your children, if you have any; you will feel it in the air; it will constrain, it will sway you, it will rule your house, it will bring up your children."

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"Oh, no! never! never! I never could! I never will! If God should give me a dear little child, I will not let it grow up in these hateful ways!"

"Then, Emmy, there will be a constant, still undefined, but real friction of your life-power from the silent grating of your wishes and feelings on the cold, positive millstone of their opinion; it will be a life-battle with a quiet, invisible, pervading spirit, who will never show himself in fair fight, but who will be around you in the very air you breathe, at your pillow when you lie down and when you rise. There is so much in these friends of yours, noble, wise, severely good, — their aims are so high, their efficiency so great, their virtues so many, — that they will act upon you with the force of a conscience, subduing, drawing, insensibly constraining you into their moulds. They have stronger wills, stronger natures than yours; and between the two forces of your own nature and theirs you will be always oscillating, so that you will never show what you can do, working either in your own way or yet in theirs: your life will be a failure."

"O Chris, why do you discourage me?"

"I am trying tonic treatment, Emily; I am showing you a real danger; I am rousing you to flee from it. John is making money fast; there is no reason why he should always remain buried in this town. Use your influence as they do, — daily, hourly, constantly, — to predispose him to take you to another sphere. Do not always shrink and yield; do not conceal and dissimulate and endeavor to persuade him and yourself that you are happy; do not put the very best face to him on it all; do not tolerate his relapses daily and hourly into his habitual, cold, inexpressive manner; and don't lay aside your own little impulsive, outspoken ways. Respect your own nature, and assert it; woo him, argue with him; use all a woman's weapons to keep him from falling back into the old Castle Doubting where he lived till

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you let him out. Dispute your mother's hateful dogma, that love is to be taken for granted without daily proof between lovers; cry down latent caloric in the market; insist that the mere fact of being a wife is not enough, — that the words spoken once, years ago, are not enough, — that love needs new leaves every summer of life, as much as your elm-trees, and new branches to grow broader and wider, and new flowers at the root to cover the ground."

"Oh, but I have heard that there is no surer way to lose love than to be exacting, and that it never comes for a woman's reproaches."

"All true as gospel, Emmy. I am not speaking of reproaches, or of unreasonable self-assertion, or of ill-temper, — you could not use any of these forces, if you would, you poor little chick! I am speaking now of the highest duty we owe our friends, the noblest, the most sacred, — that of keeping their own nobleness, goodness, pure and incorrupt. Thoughtless, instinctive, unreasoning love and self-sacrifice, such as many women long to bestow on husband and children, soil and lower the very objects of their love. You may grow saintly by self-sacrifice; but do your husband and children grow saintly by accepting it without return? I have seen a verse which says, —

> "'They who kneel at woman's shrine
> Breathe on it as they bow.'

Is not this true of all unreasoning love and self-devotion? If we let our friend become cold and selfish and exacting without a remonstrance, we are no true lover, no true friend. Any good man soon learns to discriminate between the remonstrance that comes from a woman's love to his soul, her concern for his honor, her anxiety for his moral development, and the pettish cry which comes from her own personal wants. It will be your own fault, if, for lack of anything you can do, your husband relapses into these cold, undemonstrative habits which have robbed his life of so

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much beauty and enjoyment. These dead, barren ways of living are as unchristian as they are disagreeable; and you, as a good little Christian sworn to fight heroically under Christ's banner, must make headway against this sort of family Antichrist, though it comes with a show of superior sanctity and self-sacrifice. Remember, dear, that the Master's family had its outward tokens of love as well as its inward life. The beloved leaned on His bosom; and the traitor could not have had a sign for his treachery, had there not been a daily kiss at meeting and parting with His children."

"I am glad you have said all this," said Emily, "because now I feel stronger for it. It does not now seem so selfish for me to want what it is better for John to give. Yes, I must seek what will be best for him."

And so the little one, put on the track of self-sacrifice, began to see her way clearer, as many little women of her sort do. Make them look on self-assertion as one form of martyrdom, and they will come into it.

But, for all my eloquence on this evening, the house was built in the selfsame spot as projected; and the family life went on, under the shadow of Judge Evans's elms, much as if I had not spoken. Emmy became mother of two fine, lovely boys, and waxed dimmer and fainter; while with her physical decay came increasing need of the rule in the household of mamma and sisters, who took her up energetically on eagles' wings, and kept her house, and managed her children: for what can be done when a woman hovers half her time between life and death?

At last I spoke out to John, that the climate and atmosphere were too severe for her who had became so dear to him, — to them all; and then they consented that the change much talked of and urged, but always opposed by the parents, should be made.

John bought a pretty cottage in our neighborhood, and

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brought his wife and boys; and the effect of change of moral atmosphere verified all my predictions. In a year we had our own blooming, joyous, impulsive little Emily once more, — full of life, full of cheer, full of energy, looking to the ways of her household, the merry companion of her growing boys, the blithe empress over her husband, who took to her genial sway as in the old happy days of courtship. The nightmare was past, and John was as joyous as any of us in his freedom. As Emmy said, he was turned right side out for life; and we all admired the pattern. And that is the end of my story.

And now for the moral, — and that is, that life consists of two parts, — Expression and Repression, — each of which has its solemn duties. To love, joy, hope, faith, pity, belongs the duty of expression: to anger, envy, malice, revenge, and all uncharitableness, belongs the duty of repression.

Some very religious and moral people err by applying repression to both classes alike. They repress equally the expression of love and of hatred, of pity and of anger. Such forget one great law, as true in the moral world as in the physical, — that repression lessens and deadens. Twice or thrice mowing will kill off the sturdiest crop of weeds; the roots die for want of expression. A compress on a limb will stop its growing; the surgeon knows this, and puts a tight bandage around a tumor; but what if we put a tight bandage about the heart and lungs, as some young ladies of my acquaintance do, — or bandage the feet, as they do in China? And what if we bandage a nobler inner faculty, and wrap *love* in grave-clothes?

But again there are others, and their number is legion, — perhaps you and I, reader, may know something of it in ourselves, — who have an instinctive habit of repression in regard to all that is noblest and highest within them, which they do not feel in their lower and more unworthy nature.

It comes far easier to scold our friend in an angry moment

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than to say how much we love, honor, and esteem him in a kindly mood. Wrath and bitterness speak themselves and go with their own force; love is shamefaced, looks shyly out of the window, lingers long at the door-latch.

How much freer utterance among many good Christians have anger, contempt, and censoriousness, than tenderness and love! *I hate* is said loud and with all our force. *I love* is said with a hesitating voice and blushing cheek.

In an angry mood we do an injury to a loving heart with good strong, free emphasis; but we stammer and hang back when our diviner nature tells us to confess and ask pardon. Even when our heart is broken with repentance, we haggle and linger long before we can

"Throw away the worser part of it."

How many live a stingy and niggardly life in regard to their richest inward treasures! They live with those they love dearly, whom a few more words and deeds expressive of this love would make so much happier, richer, and better; and they cannot, will not, turn the key and give it out. People who in their very souls really do love, esteem, reverence, almost worship each other, live a barren, chilly life side by side, busy, anxious, preoccupied, letting their love go by as a matter of course, a last year's growth, with no present buds and blossoms.

Are there not sons and daughters who have parents living with them as angels unawares, — husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, in whom the material for a beautiful life lies locked away in unfruitful silence, — who give time to everything but the cultivation and expression of mutual love?

The time is coming, they think, in some far future, when they shall find leisure to enjoy each other, to stop and rest side by side, to discover to each other these hidden treasures which lie idle and unused. Alas! time flies and death

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steals on, and we reiterate the complaint of one in Scripture, — "It came to pass, while thy servant was busy hither and thither, the man was gone."

The bitterest tears shed over graves are for words left unsaid and deeds left undone. "She never knew how I loved her." "He never knew what he was to me." "I always meant to make more of our friendship." "I did not know what he was to me till he was gone." Such words are the poisoned arrows which cruel Death shoots backward at us from the door of the sepulchre.

How much more we might make of our family life, of our friendships, if every secret thought of love blossomed into a deed! We are not now speaking merely of personal caresses. These may or may not be the best language of affection. Many are endowed with a delicacy, a fastidiousness of physical organization, which shrinks away from too much of these, repelled and overpowered. But there are words and looks and little observances, thoughtfulnesses, watchful little attentions, which speak of love, which make it manifest, and there is scarce a family that might not be richer in heart-wealth for more of them.

It is a mistake to suppose that relations must of course love each other because they are relations. Love must be cultivated, and can be increased by judicious culture, as wild fruits may double their bearing under the hand of a gardener; and love can dwindle and die out by neglect, as choice flower-seeds planted in poor soil dwindle and grow single.

Two causes in our Anglo-Saxon nature prevent this easy faculty and flow of expression which strike one so pleasantly in the Italian or the French life: the dread of flattery, and a constitutional shyness.

"I perfectly longed to tell So-and-so how I admired her, the other day," says Miss X.

"And why in the world did n't you tell her?"

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"Oh, it would seem like flattery, you know."

Now, what is flattery?

Flattery is insincere praise given from interested motives, not the sincere utterance to a friend of what we deem good and lovely in him.

And so, for fear of flattering, these dreadfully sincere people go on side by side with those they love and admire, giving them all the time the impression of utter indifference. Parents are so afraid of exciting pride and vanity in their children by the expression of their love and approbation, that a child sometimes goes sad and discouraged by their side, and learns with surprise, in some chance way, that they are proud and fond of him. There are times when the open expression of a father's love would be worth more than church or sermon to a boy; and his father cannot utter it, will not show it.

The other thing that represses the utterances of love is the characteristic shyness of the Anglo-Saxon blood. Oddly enough, a race born of two demonstrative, outspoken nations — the German and the French — has an habitual reserve that is like neither. There is a powerlessness of utterance in our blood that we should fight against, and struggle outward towards expression. We can educate ourselves to it, if we know and feel the necessity; we can make it a Christian duty, not only to love, but to be loving, — not only to be true friends, but to show ourselves friendly. We can make ourselves say the kind things that rise in our hearts and tremble back on our lips, — do the gentle and helpful deeds which we long to do and shrink back from; and, little by little, it will grow easier, — the love spoken will bring back the answer of love, — the kind deed will bring back a kind deed in return, — till the hearts in the family-circle, instead of being so many frozen, icy islands, shall be full of warm airs and echoing bird-voices answering back and forth with a constant melody of love.

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IV

PERSISTENCE

My little foxes are interesting little beasts; and I only hope my reader will not get tired of my charming menagerie before I have done showing him their nice points. He must recollect there are seven of them, and as yet we have shown up only three; so let him have patience.

As before stated, little foxes are the little pet sins of us educated good Christians, who hope that we are above and far out of sight of stealing, lying, and those other gross evils against which we pray every Sunday, when the Ten Commandments are read. They are not generally considered of dignity enough to be fired at from the pulpit; they seem to us too trifling to be remembered in church; they are like the red spiders on plants, — too small for the perception of the naked eye, and only to be known by the shriveling and dropping of leaf after leaf that ought to be green and flourishing.

I have another little fox in my eye, who is most active and most mischievous in despoiling the vines of domestic happiness, — in fact, who has been guilty of destroying more grapes than anybody knows of. His name I find it difficult to give with exactness. In my enumeration I called him Self-Will; another name for him — perhaps a better one — might be Persistence.

Like many another, this fault is the overaction of a most necessary and praiseworthy quality. The power of firmness is given to man as the very granite foundation of life. Without it there would be nothing accomplished; all human

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plans would be unstable as water on an inclined plane. In every well-constituted nature there must be a power of tenacity, a gift of perseverance of will; and, that man might not be without a foundation for so needful a property, the Creator has laid it in an animal faculty, which he possesses in common with the brutes.

The animal power of firmness is a brute force, a matter of brain and spinal cord, differing in different animals. The force by which a bulldog holds on to an antagonist, the persistence with which a mule will plant his four feet and set himself against blows and menaces, are good examples of the pure animal phase of a property which exists in human beings, and forms the foundation for that heroic endurance, for that perseverance, which carries on all the great and noble enterprises of life.

The domestic fault we speak of is the wild, uncultured growth of this faculty, the instinctive action of firmness uncontrolled by reason or conscience, — in common parlance, the being "set in one's way." It is the animal instinct of being "set in one's way" which we mean by self-will or persistence; and in domestic life it does the more mischief from its working as an instinct unwatched by reason and unchallenged by conscience.

In that pretty new cottage which you see on yonder knoll are a pair of young people just in the midst of that happy bustle which attends the formation of a first home in prosperous circumstances, and with all the means of making it charming and agreeable. Carpenters, upholsterers, and artificers await their will; and there remains for them only the pleasant task of arranging and determining where all their pretty and agreeable things shall be placed. Our Hero and Leander are decidedly nice people, who have been through all the proper stages of being in love with each other for the requisite and suitable time. They have written each other a letter every day for two years, beginning with "My

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dearest," and ending with "Your own," etc.; they have sent each other flowers and rings and locks of hair; they have worn each other's pictures on their hearts; they have spent hours and hours talking over all subjects under the sun, and are convinced that never was there such sympathy of souls, such unanimity of opinion, such a just, reasonable, perfect foundation for mutual esteem.

Now it is quite true that people may have a perfect agreement and sympathy in their higher intellectual nature, — may like the same books, quote the same poetry, agree in the same principles, be united in the same religion, — and nevertheless, when they come together in the simplest affair of every-day business, may find themselves jarring and impinging upon each other at every step, simply because there are to each person, in respect of daily personal habits and personal likes and dislikes, a thousand little individualities with which reason has nothing to do, which are not subjects for the use of logic, and to which they never think of applying the power of religion, — which can only be set down as the positive ultimate facts of existence with two people.

Suppose a blue-jay courts and wins and weds a Baltimore oriole. During courtship there may have been delightful sympathetic conversation on the charm of being free birds, the felicity of soaring in the blue summer air. Mr. Jay may have been all humility and all ecstasy in comparing the discordant screech of his own note with the warbling tenderness of Miss Oriole. But, once united, the two commence business relations. He is firmly convinced that a nest built among the reeds of a marsh is the only reasonable nest for a bird; she is positive that she should die there in a month of damp and rheumatism. She never heard of going to housekeeping in anything but a nice little pendulous bag swinging down from under the branches of a breezy elm; he is sure he should have water on the brain before summer was over, from constant vertigo, in such swaying, unsteady

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quarters, — he would be a sea-sick blue-jay on land, and he cannot think of it. She knows now he does n't love her, or he never would think of shutting her up in an old mouldy nest where she is sure she shall have the chills; and he knows she does n't love him, or she never would want to make him uncomfortable all his days by tilting and swinging him about as no decent bird ought to be swung. Both are dead-set in their own way and opinion; and how is either to be convinced that the way which seemeth right unto the other is not best? Nature knows this, and therefore, in her feathered tribes, blue-jays do not mate with orioles; and so bird-housekeeping goes on in peace.

But men and women as diverse in their physical tastes and habits as blue-jays and orioles are wooing and wedding every day, and coming to the business of nest-building, alias housekeeping, with predilections as violent, and as incapable of any logical defense, as the oriole's partiality for a swing-nest and the jay's preference of a nest among the reeds.

Our Hero and Leander, there, who are arranging their cottage to-day, are examples just in point. They have both of them been only children, — both the idols of circles where they have been universally deferred to. Each in his or her own circle has been looked up to as a model of good taste, and of course each has the habit of exercising and indulging very distinct personal tastes. They truly, deeply esteem, respect, and love each other, and for the very best of reasons, — because there are sympathies of the very highest kind between them. Both are generous and affectionate, — both are highly cultured in intellect and taste, — both are earnestly religious; and yet, with all this, let me tell you that the first year of their married life will be worthy to be recorded as a year of battles. Yes, these friends so true, these lovers so ardent, these individuals in themselves so admirable, cannot come into the intimate relations of life

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without an effervescence as great as that of an acid and alkali; and it will be impossible to decide which is most in fault, the acid or the alkali, both being, in their way, of the very best quality.

The reason of it all is, that both are intensely "set in their way," and the ways of no two human beings are altogether coincident. Both of them have the most sharply defined, exact tastes and preferences. In the simplest matter both have *a way*, — an exact way, — which seems to be dear to them as life's blood. In the simplest appetite or taste they know exactly what they want, and cannot, by any argument, persuasion, or coaxing, be made to want anything else.

For example, this morning dawns bright upon them, as she, in her tidy morning wrapper and trimly laced boots, comes stepping over the bales and boxes which are discharged on the veranda; while he, for joy of his new acquisition, can hardly let her walk on her own pretty feet, and is making every fond excuse to lift her over obstacles and carry her into her new dwelling in triumph.

Carpets are put down, the floors glow under the hands of obedient workmen, and now the furniture is being wheeled in.

"Put the piano in the bow-window," says the lady.

"No, not in the bow-window," says the gentleman.

"Why, my dear, of course it must go in the bow-window. How awkward it would look anywhere else! I have always seen pianos in bow-windows."

"My love, certainly you would not think of spoiling that beautiful prospect from the bow-window by blocking it up with the piano. The proper place is just here, in the corner of the room. Now try it."

"My dear, I think it looks dreadfully there; it spoils the appearance of the room."

"Well, for my part, my love, I think the appearance of

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the room would be spoiled, if you filled up the bow-window. Think what a lovely place that would be to sit in!"

"Just as if we could n't sit there behind the piano, if we wanted to!" says the lady.

"But then, how much more ample and airy the room looks as you open the door, and see through the bow-window down that little glen, and that distant peep of the village spire!"

"But I never could be reconciled to the piano standing in the corner in that way," says the lady. "*I insist* upon it, it ought to stand in the bow-window: it 's the way mamma's stands, and Aunt Jane's, and Mrs. Wilcox's; everybody has their piano so."

"If it comes to insisting," says the gentleman, "it strikes me that is a game two can play at."

"Why, my dear, you know a lady's parlor is her own ground."

"Not a married lady's parlor, I imagine. I believe it is at least equally her husband's, as he expects to pass a good portion of his time there."

"But I don't think you ought to insist on an arrangement that really is disagreeable to me," says the lady.

"And I don't think you ought to insist on an arrangement that is really disagreeable to me," says the gentleman.

And now Hero's cheeks flush, and the spirit burns within, as she says, —

"Well, if you insist upon it, I suppose it must be as you say; but I shall never take any pleasure in playing on it;" and Hero sweeps from the apartment, leaving the victor very unhappy in his conquest.

He rushes after her, and finds her up-stairs, sitting disconsolate and weeping on a packing-box.

"Now, Hero, how silly! Do have it your own way. I 'll give it up."

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"No, — let it be as you say. I forgot that it was a wife's duty to submit."

"Nonsense, Hero! Do talk like a rational woman. Don't let us quarrel like children."

"But it's so evident that I was in the right."

"My dear, I cannot concede that you were in the right; but I am willing it should be as you say."

"Now I perfectly wonder, Leander, that you don't see how awkward your way is. It would make me nervous every time I came into the room, and it would be so dark in that corner that I never could see the notes."

"And I wonder, Hero, that a woman of your taste don't see how shutting up that bow-window spoils the parlor. It's the very prettiest feature of the room."

And so round and round they go, stating and restating their arguments, both getting more and more nervous and combative, both declaring themselves perfectly ready to yield the point as an oppressive exaction, but to do battle for their own opinion as right and reason, — the animal instinct of self-will meanwhile rising and rising and growing stronger and stronger on both sides. But meanwhile in the heat of argument some side-issues and personal reflections fly out like splinters in the shivering of lances. He tells her, in his heat, that her notions are formed from deference to models in fashionable life, and that she has no idea of adaptation, — and she tells him that he is domineering, and dictatorial, and wanting to have everything his own way; and in fine, this battle is fought off and on through the day with occasional armistices of kisses and makings-up, — treacherous truces, which are all broken up by the fatal words, "My dear, after all, you must admit *I* was in the right," which of course is the signal to fight the whole battle over again.

One such prolonged struggle is the parent of many lesser ones, — the aforenamed splinters of injurious remark and

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accusation, which flew out in the heat of argument, remaining and festering and giving rise to nervous soreness; yet, where there is at the foundation real, genuine love, and a good deal of it, the pleasure of making up so balances the pain of the controversy that the two do not perceive exactly what they are doing, nor suspect that so deep and wide a love as theirs can be seriously affected by causes so insignificant.

But the cause of difficulty in both, the silent, unwatched, intense power of self-will in trifles, is all the while precipitating them into new encounters. For example, in a bright hour between the showers, Hero arranges for her Leander a repast of peace and good-will, and compounds for him a salad which is a *chef d'œuvre* among salads. Leander is also bright and propitious; but after tasting the salad, he pushes it silently away.

"My dear, you don't like your salad."

"No, my dear; I never eat anything with salad oil in it."

"Not eat salad oil! How absurd! I never heard of a salad without oil." And the lady looks disturbed.

"But, my dear, as I tell you, I never take it. I prefer simple sugar and vinegar."

"Sugar and vinegar! Why, Leander, I 'm astonished! How very bourgeois! You must really try to like my salad" (spoken in a coaxing tone).

"My dear, I never try to like anything new. I am satisfied with my old tastes."

"Well, Leander, I must say that is very ungracious and disobliging of you."

"Why any more than for you to annoy me by forcing on me what I don't like?"

"But you would like it, if you would only try. People never like olives till they have eaten three or four, and then they become passionately fond of them."

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"Then I think they are very silly to go through all that trouble, when there are enough things that they do like."

"Now, Leander, I don't think that seems amiable or pleasant at all. I think we ought to try to accommodate ourselves to the tastes of our friends."

"Then, my dear, suppose you try to like your salad with sugar and vinegar."

"But it 's so *gauche* and unfashionable! Did you ever hear of a salad made with sugar and vinegar on a table in good society?"

"My mother's table, I believe, was good society, and I learned to like it there. The truth is, Hero, for a sensible woman, you are too fond of mere fashionable and society notions."

"Yes, you told me that last week, and I think it was very unjust, — *very unjust, indeed*" — (uttered with emphasis).

"No more unjust than your telling me that I was dictatorial and obstinate."

"Well, now, Leander, dear, you must confess that you are rather obstinate."

"I don't see the proof."

"You insist on your own ways and opinions so, heaven and earth won't turn you."

"Do I insist on mine more than you on yours?"

"Certainly, you do."

"I don't think so."

Hero casts up her eyes and repeats with expression, —

> "O, wad some power the giftie gie us,
> To see oursels as others see us!"

"Precisely," says Leander. "I would that prayer were answered in your case, my dear."

"I think you take pleasure in provoking me," says the lady.

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"My dear, how silly and childish all this is!" says the gentleman. "Why can't we let each other alone?"

"You began it."

"No, my dear, begging your pardon, I did not."

"Certainly, Leander, you did."

Now a conversation of this kind may go on hour after hour, as long as the respective parties have breath and strength, both becoming secretly more and more "set in their way." On both sides is the consciousness that they might end it at once by a very simple concession.

She might say, — "Well, dear, you shall always have your salad as you like;" and he might say, — "My dear, I will try to like your salad, if you care much about it;" and if either of them would utter one of these sentences, the other would soon follow. Either would give up, if the other would set the example; but as it is, they remind us of nothing so much as two cows that we have seen standing with locked horns in a meadow, who can neither advance nor recede an inch. It is a mere deadlock of the animal instinct of firmness; reason, conscience, religion, have nothing to do with it.

The questions debated in this style by our young couple were surprisingly numerous; as, for example, whether their favorite copy of Turner should hang in the parlor or in the library, — whether their pet little landscape should hang against the wall, or be placed on an easel, — whether the bust of the Venus de Milos should stand on the marble table in the hall, or on a bracket in the library; all of which points were debated with a breadth of survey, a richness of imagery, a vigor of discussion, that would be perfectly astonishing to any one who did not know how much two very self-willed argumentative people might find to say on any point under heaven. Everything in classical antiquity, — everything in Kugler's "Hand-Book of Painting," — every opinion of living artists, — besides questions social,

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moral, and religious, — all mingled in the grand mêlée; because there is nothing in creation that is not somehow connected with everything else.

Dr. Johnson has said, — "There are a thousand familiar disputes which reason never can decide; questions that elude investigation, and make logic ridiculous; cases where something must be done, and where little can be said."

With all deference to the great moralist, we must say that this statement argues a very limited knowledge of the resources of talk possessed by two very cultivated and very self-willed persons fairly pitted against each other in practical questions; the logic may indeed be ridiculous, but such people as our Hero and Leander find no cases under the sun where something is to be done, yet where little can be said. And these wretched wranglings, this interminable labyrinth of petty disputes, waste and crumble away that high ideal of truth and tenderness, which the real, deep sympathies and actual worth of their characters entitled them to form. Their married life is not what they expected; at times they are startled by the reflection that they have somehow grown unlovely to each other; and yet, if Leander goes away to pass a week, and thinks of his Hero in the distance, he can compare no other woman to her; and the days seem long and the house empty to Hero while he is gone; both wonder at themselves when they look over their petty bickerings, but neither knows exactly how to catch the little fox that spoils their vines.

It is astonishing how much we think about ourselves, yet to how little purpose, — how very clever people will talk and wonder about themselves and each other, and yet go on, year after year, not knowing how to use either themselves or each other, — not having as much practical philosophy in the matter of their own characters and that of their friends as they have in respect of the screws of their gas-fixtures or the management of their water-pipes.

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"But I won't have any such scenes with my wife," says Don Positivo. "I won't marry one of your clever women; they are always positive and disagreeable. I look for a wife of a gentle and yielding nature, that shall take her opinions from me, and accommodate her tastes to mine." And so Don Positivo goes and marries a pretty little pink-and-white concern, so lisping and soft and delicate that he is quite sure she cannot have a will of her own. She *is* the moon of his heavens, to shine only by his reflected light.

We would advise our gentlemen friends who wish to enjoy the felicity of having their own way, not to try the experiment with a pretty fool; for the obstinacy of cleverness and reason is nothing to the obstinacy of folly and inanity.

Let our friend once get in the seat opposite to him at table a pretty creature who cries for the moon, and insists that he does n't love her because he does n't get it for her; and in vain may he display his superior knowledge of astronomy, and prove to her that the moon is not to be got. She listens with her head on one side, and after he has talked himself quite out of breath, repeats the very same sentence she began the discussion with, without variation or addition.

If she wants darling Johnny taken away from school, because cruel teachers will not give up the rules of the institution for his pleasure, in vain does Don Positivo, in the most select and superior English, enlighten her on the necessity of habits of self-control and order for a boy, — the impossibility that a teacher should make exceptions for their particular darling, — the absolute, perishing need that the boy should begin to do something. She hears him all through, and then says, "I don't know anything about that. I know what I want; I want Johnny taken away." And so she weeps, sulks, storms, entreats, lies awake nights, has long fits of sick-headache, — in short, shows that a pretty animal,

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without reason or cultivation, can be, in her way, quite as formidable an antagonist as the most clever of her sex.

Leander can sometimes vanquish his Hero in fair fight by the weapons of good logic, because she is a woman capable of appreciating reason, and able to feel the force of the considerations he adduces; and when he does vanquish and carry her captive by his bow and spear, he feels that he has gained a victory over no ignoble antagonist, and he becomes a hero in his own eyes. Though a woman of much will, still she is a woman of much reason; and if he has many vexations with her pertinacity, he is never without hope in her good sense; but alas for him whose wife has only the animal instinct of firmness, without any development of the judgment or reasoning faculties! The conflicts with a woman whom a man respects and admires are often extremely trying; but the conflicts with one whom he cannot help despising, become in the end simply disgusting.

But the inquiry now arises, What shall be done with all the questions Dr. Johnson speaks of, which reason cannot decide, which elude investigation, and make logic ridiculous, — cases where something must be done, and where little can be said?

Read Mrs. Ellis's "Wives of England," and you have one solution of the problem. The good women of England are there informed that there is to be no discussion, that everything in the ménage is to follow the rule of the lord, and that the wife has but one hope, namely, that grace may be given him to know exactly what his own will is. "*L'état, c'est moi,*" is the lesson which every English husband learns of Mrs. Ellis, and we should judge from the pictures of English novels that this "awful right divine" is insisted on in detail in domestic life.

Miss Edgeworth makes her magnificent General Clarendon talk about his "commands" to his accomplished and elegant wife; and he rings the parlor-bell with such an air,

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calls up and interrogates trembling servants with such awful majesty, and lays about him generally in so very military and tremendous a style, that we are not surprised that poor little Cecilia is frightened into lying, being half out of her wits in terror of so very martial a husband.

During his hours of courtship he majestically informs her mother that he never could consent to receive as his wife any woman who has had another attachment; and so the poor puss, like a naughty girl, conceals a little schoolgirl flirtation of bygone days, and thus gives rise to most agonizing and tragic scenes with her terrible lord, who petrifies her one morning by suddenly drawing the bed-curtains and flapping an old love-letter in her eyes, asking in tones of suppressed thunder, "Cecilia, is this your writing?"

The more modern female novelists of England give us representations of their view of the right divine no less stringent. In a very popular story called "Agatha's Husband," the plot is as follows. A man marries a beautiful girl with a large fortune. Before the marriage, he discovers that his brother, who has been guardian of the estate, has fraudulently squandered the property, so that it can only be retrieved by the strictest economy. For the sake of getting her heroine into a situation to illustrate her moral, the authoress now makes her hero give a solemn promise not to divulge to his wife or to any human being the fraud by which she suffers.

The plot of the story then proceeds to show how very badly the young wife behaves when her husband takes her to mean lodgings, deprives her of wonted luxuries and comforts, and obstinately refuses to give any kind of sensible reason for his conduct. Instead of looking up to him with blind faith and unquestioning obedience, following his directions without inquiry, and believing not only without evidence, but against apparent evidence, that he is the soul of honor and wisdom, this perverse Agatha murmurs, com-

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plains, thinks herself very ill-used, and occasionally is even wicked enough, in a very mild way, to say so, — whereat her husband looks like a martyr and suffers in silence; and thus we are treated to a volume of mutual distresses, which are at last ended by the truth coming out, the abused husband mounting the throne in glory, and the penitent wife falling in the dust at his feet, and confessing what a wretch she has been all along to doubt him.

The authoress of "Jane Eyre" describes the process of courtship in much the same terms as one would describe the breaking of a horse. Shirley is contumacious and self-willed, and Moore, her lover and tutor, gives her "Le Chevaldompté" for a French lesson, as a gentle intimation of the work he has in hand in paying her his addresses; and after long struggling against his power, when at last she consents to his love, he addresses her thus, under the figure of a very fierce leopardess: —

"Tame or wild, fierce or subdued, you are *mine*."

And she responds: —

"I am glad I know my keeper and am used to him. Only his voice will I follow, only his hand shall manage me, only at his feet will I repose."

The accomplished authoress of "Nathalie" represents the struggles of a young girl engaged to a man far older than herself, extremely dark and heroic, fond of behaving in a very unaccountable manner, and declaring nevertheless, in awful and mysterious tones, that he has such a passion for being believed in, that if any one of his friends, under the most suspicious circumstances, admits one doubt of his honor, all will be over between them forever.

After establishing his power over Nathalie fully, and amusing himself quietly for a time with the contemplation of her perplexities and anxieties, he at last unfolds to her the mysterious counsels of his will by declaring to another of her lovers, in her presence, that he "has the intention of

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asking this young lady to become his wife." During the engagement, however, he contrives to disturb her tranquillity by insisting prematurely on the right divine of husbands, and, as she proves fractious, announces to her that, much as he loves her, he sees no prospect of future happiness in their union, and that they had better part.

The rest of the story describes the struggles and anguish of the two, who pass through a volume of distresses, he growing more cold, proud, severe, and misanthropic than ever, all of which is supposed to be the fault of naughty Miss Nathalie, who might have made a saint of him, could she only have found her highest pleasure in letting him have his own way. Her conscience distresses her; it is all her fault; at last, worn out in the strife, she resolves to be a good girl, goes to his library, finds him alone, and, in spite of an insulting reception, humbles herself at his feet, gives up all her naughty pride, begs to be allowed to wait on him as a handmaid, and is rewarded by his graciously announcing, that, since she will stay with him at all events, she may stay as his wife; and the story leaves her in the last sentence sitting in what we are informed is the only true place of happiness for a woman, at her husband's feet.

This is the solution which the most cultivated women of England give of the domestic problem. According to these fair interpreters of English ideas, the British lion on his own domestic hearth, standing in awful majesty with his back to the fire and his hands under his coat-tails, can be supposed to have no such disreputable discussions as we have described; since his partner, as Miss Brontë says, has learned to know her keeper, and her place at his feet, and can conceive no happiness so great as hanging the picture and setting the piano exactly as he likes.

Of course this will be met with a general shriek of horror on the part of our fair republican friends, and an equally general disclaimer on the part of our American gentlemen,

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who, so far as we know, would be quite embarrassed by the idea of assuming any such pronounced position at the fireside.

The genius of American institutions is not towards a display of authority. All needed authority exists among us, but exists silently, with as little external manifestation as possible. Our President is but a fellow citizen, personally the equal of other citizens. We obey him because we have chosen him, and because we find it convenient, in regulating our affairs, to have one final appeal and one deciding voice.

The position in which the Bible and the marriage service place the husband in the family amounts to no more. He is the head of the family in all that relates to its material interests, its legal relations, its honor and standing in society; and no true woman who respects herself would any more hesitate to promise to yield to him this position and the deference it implies, than an officer of state to yield to the President. But because Mr. Lincoln is officially above Mr. Seward, it does not follow that there can be nothing between them but absolute command on the one part and prostrate submission on the other; neither does it follow, that the superior claims in all respects to regulate the affairs and conduct of the inferior. There are still wide spheres of individual freedom, as there are in the case of husband and wife; and no sensible man but would feel himself ridiculous in entering another's proper sphere with the voice of authority.

The inspired declaration, that "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church," is certainly to be qualified by the evident points of difference in the subjects spoken of. It certainly does not mean that any man shall be invested with the rights of omnipotence and omniscience, but simply that in the family state he is the head and protector, even as in the Church is the Saviour.

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It is merely the announcement of a great natural law of society which obtains through all the tribes and races of men, — a great and obvious fact of human existence.

The silly and senseless reaction against this idea in some otherwise sensible women is, I think, owing to the kind of extravagances and overstatements to which we have alluded. It is as absurd to cavil at the word *obey* in the marriage ceremony as for a military officer to set himself against the etiquette of the army, or a man to refuse the freeman's oath.

Two young men every way on a footing of equality and friendship may be one of them a battalion-commander and the other a staff-officer. It would be alike absurd for the one to take airs about not obeying a man every way his equal, and for the other to assume airs of lordly dictation out of the sphere of his military duties. The mooting of the question of marital authority between two well-bred, well-educated Christian people of the nineteenth century is no less absurd.

While the husband has a certain power confided to him for the support and maintenance of the family, and for the preservation of those relations which involve its good name and well-being before the world, he has no claim to an authoritative exertion of will in reference to the little personal tastes and habits of the inferior. He has no divine right to require that everything shall be arranged to please him, at the expense of his wife's preferences and feelings, any more than if he were not the head of the household. In a thousand indifferent matters which do not touch the credit and respectability of the family, he is just as much bound sometimes to give up his own will and way for the comfort of his wife as she is in certain other matters to submit to his decisions. In a large number of cases the husband and wife stand as equal human beings before God, and the indulgence of unchecked and inconsiderate self-will on either side is a sin.

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It is my serious belief that writings such as we have been considering do harm both to men and women, by insensibly inspiring in the one an idea of a licensed prerogative of selfishness and self-will, and in the other an irrational and indiscreet servility.

Is it any benefit to a man to find in the wife of his bosom the flatterer of his egotism, the acquiescent victim of his little selfish exactions, to be nursed and petted and cajoled in all his faults and fault-findings, and to see everybody falling prostrate before his will in the domestic circle? Is this the true way to make him a manly and Christ-like man? It is my belief that many so-called good wives have been accessory to making their husbands very bad Christians.

However, then, the little questions of difference in everyday life are to be disposed of between two individuals, it is in the worst possible taste and policy to undertake to settle them by mere authority. All romance, all poetry, all beauty are over forever with a couple between whom the struggle of mere authority has begun. No, there is no way out of difficulties of this description but by the application, on both sides, of good sense and religion to the little differences of life.

A little reflection will enable any person to detect in himself that setness in trifles which is the result of the unwatched instinct of self-will, and to establish over himself a jealous guardianship.

Every man and every woman, in their self-training and self-culture, should study the art of giving up in little things with a good grace. The charm of polite society is formed by that sort of freedom and facility in all the members of a circle which makes each one pliable to the influences of the others, and sympathetic to slide into the moods and tastes of others without a jar.

In courteous and polished circles, there are no stiff rail-

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road tracks, cutting straight through everything, and grating harsh thunders all along their course, but smooth, meandering streams, tranquilly bending hither and thither to every undulation of the flowery banks. What makes the charm of polite society would make no less the charm of domestic life; but it can come only by watchfulness and self-discipline in each individual.

Some people have much more to struggle with in this way than others. Nature has made them precise and exact. They are punctilious in their hours, rigid in their habits, pained by any deviation from regular rule.

Now Nature is always perversely ordering that men and women of just this disposition should become desperately enamored of their exact opposites. The man of rules and formulas and hours has his heart carried off by a gay, careless little chit, who never knows the day of the month, tears up the newspaper, loses the door-key, and makes curl-papers out of the last bill; or, *per contra*, our exact and precise little woman, whose belongings are like the waxen cells of a bee, gives her heart to some careless fellow, who enters her sanctum in muddy boots, upsets all her little nice household divinities whenever he is going on a hunting or fishing bout, and can see no manner of sense in the discomposure she feels in the case.

What can such couples do, if they do not adopt the compromise of reason and sense, — if each arms his or her own peculiarities with the back force of persistent self-will, and runs them over the territories of the other?

A sensible man and woman, finding themselves thus placed, can govern themselves by a just philosophy, and, instead of carrying on a life-battle, can modify their own tastes and requirements, turn their eyes from traits which do not suit them to those which do, resolving, at all events, however reasonable be the taste or propensity which they sacrifice, to give up all rather than have domestic strife.

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There is one form which persistency takes that is peculiarly trying: I mean that persistency of opinion which deems it necessary to stop and raise an argument in self-defense on the slightest personal criticism.

John tells his wife that she is half an hour late with her breakfast this morning, and she indignantly denies it.

"But look at my watch!"

"Your watch is n't right."

"I set it by railroad time."

"Well, that was a week ago; that watch of yours always gains."

"No, my dear, you 're mistaken."

"Indeed, I 'm not. Did I not hear you telling Mr. B—— about it?"

"My dear, that was a year ago, — before I had it cleaned."

"How can you say so, John? It was only a month ago."

"My dear, you are mistaken."

And so the contest goes on, each striving for the last word.

This love of the last word has made more bitterness in families and spoiled more Christians than it is worth. A thousand little differences of this kind would drop to the ground, if either party would let them drop. Suppose John is mistaken in saying breakfast is late, — suppose that fifty of the little criticisms which we make on one another are well or ill founded, are they worth a discussion? Are they worth ill-tempered words, such as are almost sure to grow out of a discussion? Are they worth throwing away peace and love for? Are they worth the destruction of the only fair ideal left on earth, — a quiet, happy home? Better let the most unjust statements pass in silence than risk one's temper in a discussion upon them.

Discussions, assuming the form of warm arguments, are

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never pleasant ingredients of domestic life, never safe recreations between near friends. They are, generally speaking, mere unsuspected vents for self-will, and the cases are few where they do anything more than to make both parties more positive in their own way than they were before.

A calm comparison of opposing views, a fair statement of reasons on either side, may be valuable; but when warmth, and heat, and love of victory, and pride of opinion come in, good temper and good manners are too apt to step out.

And now Christopher, having come to the end of his subject, pauses for a sentence to close with. There are a few lines of a poet that sum up so beautifully all he has been saying that he may be pardoned for closing with them.

"Alas! how light a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love;
Hearts that the world has vainly tried,
And sorrow but more closely tied;
That stood the storm when waves were rough,
Yet in a sunny hour fall off,
Like ships that have gone down at sea
When heaven was all tranquillity!
A something light as air, a look,
A word unkind, or wrongly taken, —
O love that tempests never shook,
A breath, a touch like this hath shaken!
For ruder words will soon rush in
To spread the breach that words begin,
And eyes forget the gentle ray
They wore in courtship's smiling day,
And voices lose the tone which shed
A tenderness round all they said, —
Till, fast declining, one by one,
The sweetnesses of love are gone,
And hearts so lately mingled seem
Like broken clouds, or like the stream,
That, smiling, left the mountain-brow
As though its waters ne'er could sever,
Yet, ere it reach the plain below,
Breaks into floods that part forever."

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V

INTOLERANCE

"And what are you going to preach about this month, Mr. Crowfield?"

"I am going to give a sermon on *Intolerance*, Mrs. Crowfield."

"Religious intolerance?"

"No, — domestic and family and educational intolerance; one of the seven deadly sins on which I am preaching, — one of 'the foxes.'"

People are apt to talk as if all the intolerance in life were got up and expended in the religious world; whereas religious intolerance is only a small branch of the radical, strong, all-pervading intolerance of human nature. Physicians are quite as intolerant as theologians. They never have had the power of burning at the stake for medical opinions, but they certainly have shown the will. Politicians are intolerant. Philosophers are intolerant, especially those who pique themselves on liberal opinions. Painters and sculptors are intolerant. And housekeepers are intolerant, virulently denunciatory concerning any departures from their particular domestic creed.

Mrs. Alexander Exact, seated at her domestic altar, gives homilies on the degeneracy of modern housekeeping equal to the lamentations of Dr. Holdfast as to the falling off from the good old faith.

"Don't tell me about pillow-cases made without felling," says Mrs Alexander, "it's slovenly and shiftless. I

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would n't have such a pillow-case in my house any more than I'd have vermin."

"But," says a trembling young housekeeper, conscious of unfelled pillow-cases at home, "don't you think, Mrs. Alexander, that some of these old traditions might be dispensed with? It really is not necessary to do all the work that has been done so thoroughly and exactly, — to double-stitch every wristband, fell every seam, count all the threads of gathers, and take a stitch to every gather. It makes beautiful sewing, to be sure; but when a woman has a family of little children and a small income, if all her sewing is to be kept up in this perfect style, she wears her life out in stitching. Had she not better slight a little, and get air and exercise?"

"Don't tell me about air and exercise! What did my grandmother do? Why, she did all her own work, and made grandfather's ruffled shirts besides, with the finest stitching and gathers; and she found exercise enough, I warrant you. Women of this day are miserable, sickly, degenerate creatures."

"But, my dear madam, look at poor Mrs. Evans, over the way, with her pale face and her eight little ones."

"Miserable manager," said Mrs. Alexander. "If she 'd get up at five o'clock the year round as I do, she 'd find time enough to do things properly, and be the better for it."

"But, my dear madam, Mrs. Evans is a very delicately organized, nervous woman."

"Nervous! Don't tell me! Every woman nowadays is nervous. She can't get up in the morning, because she 's nervous. She can't do her sewing decently, because she 's nervous. Why, I might have been as nervous as she is, if I 'd have petted and coddled myself as she does. But I get up early, take a walk in the fresh air of a mile or so before breakfast, and come home feeling the better for it.

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I do all my own sewing, — never put out a stitch; and I flatter myself my things are made as they ought to be. I always make my boys' shirts and Mr. Exact's, and they are made as shirts ought to be, — and yet I find plenty of time for calling, shopping, business, and company. It only requires management and resolution."

"It is perfectly wonderful, to be sure, Mrs. Exact, to see all that you do; but don't you get very tired sometimes?"

"No, not often. I remember, though, the week before last Christmas, I made and baked eighteen pies and ten loaves of cake in one day, and I was really quite worn out; but I did n't give way to it. I told Mr. Exact I thought it would rest me to take a drive into New York and attend the Sanitary Fair; and so we did. I suppose Mrs. Evans would have thought she must go to bed and coddle herself for a month."

"But, dear Mrs. Exact, when a woman is kept awake nights by crying babies" —

"There 's no need of having crying babies; my babies never cried; it 's just as you begin with children. I might have had to be up and down every hour of the night with mine, just as Mrs. Evans does; but I knew better. I used to take 'em up about ten o'clock, and feed and make 'em all comfortable; and that was the last of 'em, till I was ready to get up in the morning. I never lost a night's sleep with any of mine."

"Not when they were teething?"

"No. I knew how to manage that. I used to lance their gums myself, and I never had any trouble: it 's all in management. I weaned 'em all myself, too: there 's no use in having any fuss in weaning children."

"Mrs. Exact, you are a wonderful manager; but it would be impossible to bring up all babies so."

"You 'll never make me believe that: people only need to begin right. I 'm sure I 've had a trial of eight."

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"But there 's that one baby of Mrs. Evans's makes more trouble than all your eight. It cries every night so that somebody has to be up walking with it; it wears out all the nurses, and keeps poor Mrs. Evans sick all the time."

"Not the least need of it; nothing but shiftless management. Suppose I had allowed my children to be walked with; I might have had terrible times, too; but I began right. I set down my foot that they should lie still, and they did; and if they cried, I never lighted a candle, or took 'em up, or took any kind of notice of it; and so, after a little, they went off to sleep. Babies very soon find out where they can take advantage, and where they can't. It 's nothing but temper makes babies cry; and if I could n't hush 'em any other way, I should give 'em a few good smart slaps, and they would soon learn to behave themselves."

"But, dear Mrs. Exact, you were a strong, healthy woman, and had strong, healthy children."

"Well, is n't that baby of Mrs. Evans's healthy, I want to know? I 'm sure it is a great creature, and thrives and grows fat as fast as ever I saw a child. You need n't tell me anything is the matter with that child but temper and its mother's coddling management."

Now, in the neighborhood where she lives, Mrs. Alexander Exact is the wonderful woman, the Lady Bountiful, the pattern female. Her cake never rises on one side, or has a heavy streak in it. Her furs never get a moth in them; her carpets never fade; her sweetmeats never ferment; her servants never neglect their work; her children never get things out of order; her babies never cry, never keep one awake o' nights; and her husband never in his life said, "My dear, there 's a button off my shirt." Flies never infest her kitchen, cockroaches and red ants never invade her premises, a spider never had time to spin a web on one of her walls. Everything in her establishment is shining with neatness, crisp and bristling with absolute perfection,

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— and it is she, the ever-up-and-dressed, unsleeping, wide-awake, omnipresent, never-tiring Mrs. Exact, that does it all.

Besides keeping her household ways thus immaculate, Mrs. Exact is on all sorts of charitable committees, does all sorts of fancy-work for fairs; and whatever she does is done perfectly. She is a most available, most helpful, most benevolent woman, and general society has reason to rejoice in her existence.

But, for all this, Mrs. Exact is as intolerant as Torquemada or a locomotive-engine. She has her own track, straight and inevitable; her judgments and opinions cut through society in right lines, with all the force of her example and all the steam of her energy, turning out neither for the old nor the young, the weak nor the weary. She cannot, and she will not, conceive the possibility that there may be other sorts of natures than her own, and that other kinds of natures must have other ways of living and doing.

Good and useful as she is, she is terrible as an army with banners to her poor, harassed, delicate, struggling neighbor across the way, who, in addition to an aching, confused head, an aching back, sleepless, harassed nights, and weary, sinking days, is burdened everywhere and every hour with the thought that Mrs. Exact thinks all her troubles are nothing but poor management, and that she might do just like her, if she would. With very little self-confidence or self-assertion, she is withered and paralyzed by this discouraging thought. *Is* it, then, her fault that this never-sleeping baby cries all night, and that all her children never could and never would be brought up by those exact rules which she hears of as so efficacious in the household over the way? The thought of Mrs. Alexander Exact stands over her like a constable; the remembrance of her is grievous; the burden of her opinion is heavier than all her other burdens.

Now the fact is, that Mrs. Exact comes of a long-lived, strong-backed, strong-stomached race, with "limbs of British

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oak and nerves of wire." The shadow of a sensation of nervous pain or uneasiness never has been known in her family for generations, and her judgments of poor little Mrs. Evans are about as intelligent as those of a good stout Shanghai hen on a humming-bird. Most useful and comfortable, these Shanghai hens, — and very ornamental, and in a small way useful, these humming-birds; but let them not regulate each other's diet, or lay down schemes for each other's housekeeping. Has not one as much right to its nature as the other?

This intolerance of other people's natures is one of the greatest causes of domestic unhappiness. The perfect householders are they who make their household rule so flexible that all sorts of differing natures may find room to grow and expand and express themselves without infringing upon others.

Some women are endowed with a tact for understanding human nature and guiding it. They give a sense of largeness and freedom; they find a place for every one, see at once what every one is good for, and are inspired by Nature with the happy wisdom of not wishing or asking of any human being more than that human being was made to give. They have the portion in due season for all: a bone for the dog; catnip for the cat; cuttle-fish and hempseed for the bird; a book or review for their bashful literary visitor; lively gossip for thoughtless Miss Seventeen; knitting for Grandmamma; fishing-rods, boats, and gunpowder, for Young Restless, whose beard is just beginning to grow; — and they never fall into pets because the canary-bird won't relish the dog's bone, or the dog eat canary-seed, or young Miss Seventeen read old Mr. Sixty's review, or young Master Restless take delight in knitting-work, or old Grandmamma feel complacency in guns and gunpowder.

Again, there are others who lay the foundations of family life so narrow, straight, and strict, that there is room in

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them only for themselves and people exactly like themselves; and hence comes much misery.

A man and woman come together out of different families and races, often united by only one or two sympathies, with many differences. Their first wisdom would be to find out each other's nature, and accommodate to it as a fixed fact; instead of which, how many spend their lives in a blind fight with an opposite nature, as good as their own in its way, but not capable of meeting their requirements.

A woman trained in an exact, thriving, business family, where her father and brothers bore everything along with true worldly skill and energy, falls in love with a literary man, who knows nothing of affairs, whose life is in his library and his pen. Shall she vex and torment herself and him because he is not a business man? Shall she constantly hold up to him the example of her father and brothers, and how they would manage in this and that case? or shall she say cheerily and once for all to herself, — "My husband has no talent for business; that is not his forte; but then he has talents far more interesting: I cannot have everything; let him go on undisturbed, and do what he can do well, and let me try to make up for what he cannot do; and if there be disabilities come on us in consequence of what we neither of us can do, let us both take them cheerfully"?

In the same manner a man takes out of the bosom of an adoring family one of those delicate, petted singing-birds that seem to be created simply to adorn life and make it charming. Is it fair, after he has got her, to compare her housekeeping, and her efficiency and capability in the material part of life, with those of his mother and sisters, who are strong-limbed, practical women, that have never thought about anything but housekeeping from their cradle? Shall he all the while vex himself and her with the remembrance of how his mother used to get up at five o'clock and arrange

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all the business of the day, — how she kept all the accounts, — how she saw to everything and settled everything, — how there never were break-downs or irregularities in her system?

This would be unfair. If a man wanted such a housekeeper, why did he not get one? There were plenty of single women, who understood washing, ironing, clear-starching, cooking, and general housekeeping, better than the little canary-bird which he fell in love with, and wanted for her plumage and her song, for her merry tricks, for her bright eyes and pretty ways. Now he has got his bird, let him keep it as something fine and precious, to be cared for and watched over, and treated according to the laws of its frail and delicate nature; and so treating it, he may many years keep the charms which first won his heart. He may find, too, if he watches and is careful, that a humming-bird can, in its own small, dainty way, build a nest as efficiently as a turkey-gobbler, and hatch her eggs and bring up her young in humming-bird fashion; but to do it, she must be left unfrightened and undisturbed.

But the evils of domestic intolerance increase with the birth of children. As parents come together out of different families with ill-assorted peculiarities, so children are born to them with natures differing from their own and from each other.

The parents seize on their first new child as a piece of special property which they are forthwith to turn to their own account. The poor little waif, just drifted on the shores of Time, has perhaps folded up in it a character as positive as that of either parent; but, for all that, its future course is marked out for it, all arranged and predetermined.

John has a perfect mania for literary distinction. His own education was somewhat imperfect, but he is determined his children shall be prodigies. His first-born turns out a girl, who is to write like Madame de Staël, — to be an

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able, accomplished woman. He bores her with literature from her earliest years, reads extracts from Milton to her when she is only eight years old, and is secretly longing to be playing with her doll's wardrobe. He multiplies governesses, spares no expense, and when, after all, his daughter turns out to be only a very pretty, sensible, domestic girl, fond of cross-stitching embroidery, and with a more decided vocation for sponge-cake and pickles than for poetry and composition, he is disappointed and treats her coldly; and she is unhappy and feels that she has vexed her parents, because she cannot be what nature never meant her to be. If John had taken meekly the present that Mother Nature gave him, and humbly set himself to inquire what it was and what it was good for, he might have had years of happiness with a modest, amiable, and domestic daughter, to whom had been given the instinct to study household good.

But again, a bustling, pickling, preserving, stocking-knitting, universal-housekeeping woman has a daughter who dreams over her knitting-work and hides a book under her sampler, — whose thoughts are straying in Greece, Rome, Germany, — who is reading, studying, thinking, writing, without knowing why; and the mother sets herself to fight this nature, and to make the dreamy scholar into a driving, thoroughgoing, exact woman-of-business. How many tears are shed, how much temper wasted, how much time lost, in such encounters!

Each of these natures, under judicious training, might be made to complete itself by cultivation of that which it lacked. The born housekeeper can never be made a genius, but she may add to her household virtues some reasonable share of literary culture and appreciation, — and the born scholar may learn to come down out of her clouds, and see enough of this earth to walk its practical ways without stumbling; but this must be done by tolerance of their

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nature, — by giving it play and room, — first recognizing its existence and its rights, and then seeking to add to it the properties it wants.

A clever Yankee housekeeper, fruitful of resources, can work with any tools or with no tools at all. If she absolutely cannot get a tack-hammer with a claw on one end, she can take up carpet-nails with an iron spoon, and drive them down with a flatiron; and she has sense enough not to scold, though she does her work with them at considerable disadvantage. She knows that she is working with tools made for another purpose, and never thinks of being angry at their unhandiness. She might have equal patience with a daughter unhandy in physical things, but acute and skillful in mental ones, if she once had the idea suggested to her.

An ambitious man has a son whom he destines to a learned profession. He is to be the Daniel Webster of the family. The boy has a robust, muscular frame, great physical vigor and enterprise, a brain bright and active in all that may be acquired through the bodily senses, but which is dull and confused and wandering when put to abstract book-knowledge. He knows every ship at the wharf, her build, tonnage, and sailing qualities; he knows every railroad engine, its power, speed, and hours of coming and going; he is always busy, sawing, hammering, planing, digging, driving, making bargains, with his head full of plans, all relating to something outward and physical. In all these matters his mind works strongly, his ideas are clear, his observation acute, his conversation sensible and worth listening to. But as to the distinction between common nouns and proper nouns, between the subject and the predicate of a sentence, between the relative pronoun and the demonstrative adjective pronoun, between the perfect and the preter-perfect tense, he is extremely dull and hazy. The region of abstract ideas is to him a region of ghosts and shadows. Yet

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his youth is mainly a dreary wilderness of uncomprehended, incomprehensible studies, of privations, tasks, punishments, with a sense of continual failure, disappointment, and disgrace, because his father is trying to make a scholar and a literary man out of a boy whom nature made to till the soil or manage the material forces of the world. He might be a farmer, an engineer, a pioneer of a new settlement, a sailor, a soldier, a thriving man of business; but he grows up feeling that his nature is a crime, and that he is good for nothing, because he is not good for what he had been blindly predestined to before he was born.

Another boy is a born mechanic: he understands machinery at a glance; he is all the while pondering and studying and experimenting. But his wheels and his axles and his pulleys are all swept away, as so much irrelevant lumber; he is doomed to go into the Latin School, and spend three or four years in trying to learn what he never can learn well, — disheartened by always being at the tail of his class, and seeing many a boy inferior to himself in general culture who is rising to brilliant distinction simply because he can remember those hopeless, bewildering Greek quantities and accents which he is constantly forgetting, — as, for example, how properispomena become paroxytones when the ultimate becomes long, and proparoxytones become paroxytones when the ultimate becomes long, while paroxytones with a short penult remain paroxytones. Each of this class of rules, however, having about sixteen exceptions, which hold good except in three or four other exceptional cases under them, the labyrinth becomes delightfully wilder and wilder; and the crowning beauty of the whole is, that, when the bewildered boy has swallowed the whole, — tail, scales, fins, and bones, — he then is allowed to read the classics in peace, without the slightest occasion to refer to them again during his college course.

The great trouble with the so-called classical course of

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education is, that it is made strictly for but one class of minds, which it drills in respects for which they have by nature an aptitude, and to which it presents scarcely enough of difficulty to make it a mental discipline, while to another and equally valuable class of minds it presents difficulties so great as actually to crush and discourage. There are, we will venture to say, in every ten boys in Boston, four, and those not the dullest or poorest in quality, who could never go through the discipline of the Boston Latin School without such a strain on the brain and nervous system as would leave them no power for anything else.

A bright intelligent boy, whose talents lay in the line of natural philosophy and mechanics, passed with brilliant success through the Boston English High School. He won the first medals, and felt all that pride and enthusiasm which belong to a successful student. He entered the Latin Classical School as the next step on his way to a collegiate education. With a large philosophic and reasoning brain, he had a very poor verbal and textual memory; and here he began to see himself distanced by boys who had hitherto looked up to him. They could rattle off catalogues of names; they could do so all the better from the habit of not thinking of what they studied. They could commit the Latin Grammar, coarse print and fine, and run through the interminable mazes of Greek accents and Greek inflections. This boy of large mind and brain found himself always behindhand, and became, in time, utterly discouraged; no amount of study could place him on an equality with his former inferiors. His health failed, and he dropped from school. Many a fine fellow has been lost to himself, and lost to an educated life, by just such a failure. The collegiate system is like a great coal-screen: every piece not of a certain size must fall through. This may do well enough for screening coal; but what if it were used indiscriminately for a mixture of coal and diamonds?

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"Poor boy!" said Ole Bull, compassionately, when one sought to push a schoolboy from the steps of an omnibus, where he was getting a surreptitious ride. "Poor boy! let him stay. Who knows his trials? Perhaps he studies Latin."

The witty Heinrich Heine says, in bitter remembrance of his early sufferings, — "The Romans would never have conquered the world, if they had had to learn their own language. They had leisure, because they were born with the knowledge of what nouns form their accusatives in *im*."

Now we are not among those who decry the Greek and Latin classics. We think it a glorious privilege to read both those grand old tongues, and that an intelligent, cultivated man who is shut out from the converse of the splendid minds of those olden times loses a part of his birthright; and therefore it is that we mourn that but one dry, hard, technical path, one sharp, straight, narrow way, is allowed into so goodly a land of knowledge. We think there is no need that the study of Greek and Latin should be made such a horror. There is many a man without a verbal memory, who could neither recite in order the paradigms of the Greek verbs, nor repeat the lists of nouns that form their accusative in one termination or another, who, nevertheless, by the exercise of his faculties of comparison and reasoning, could learn to read the Greek and Latin classics so as to take their sense and enjoy their spirit; and that is all that is worth caring for. We have known one young scholar, who could not by any possibility repeat the lists of exceptions to the rules in the Latin Grammar, who yet delightedly filled his private notebook with quotations from the "Æneid," and was making extracts of literary gems from his Greek Reader, at the same time that he was every day "screwed" by his tutor upon some technical point of the language.

Is there not many a master of English, many a writer

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and orator, who could not repeat from memory the list of nouns ending in *y* that form their plural in *ies*, with the exceptions under it? How many of us could do this? Would it help a good writer and fluent speaker to know the whole of Murray's Grammar by heart, or does real knowledge of a language ever come in this way?

At present the rich stores of ancient literature are kept like the savory stew which poor Dominie Sampson heard simmering in the witch's kettle. One may have much appetite, but there is but one way of getting it. The Meg Merrilies of our educational system, with her harsh voice, and her "Gape, sinner, and swallow," is the only introduction, — and so, many a one turns and runs frightened from the feast.

This intolerant mode of teaching the classical languages is peculiar to them alone. Multitudes of girls and boys are learning to read and to speak German, French, and Italian, and to feel all the delights of expatiating in the literature of a new language, purely because of a simpler, more natural, less pedantic mode of teaching these languages.

Intolerance in the established system of education works misery in families, because family pride decrees that every boy of good status in society, will he, nill he, shall go through college, or he almost forfeits his position as a gentleman.

"Not go to Cambridge!" says Scholasticus to his first-born. "Why, I went there, — and my father, and his father, and his father before him. Look at the Cambridge Catalogue and you will see the names of our family ever since the College was founded!"

"But I can't learn Latin and Greek," says young Scholasticus. "I can't remember all those rules and exceptions. I've tried, and I can't. If you could only know how my head feels when I try! And I won't be at the foot of the class all the time, if I have to get my living by digging."

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Suppose, now, the boy is pushed on at the point of the bayonet to a kind of knowledge in which he has no interest, communicated in a way that requires faculties which nature has not given him, — what occurs?

He goes through his course, either shamming, shirking, ponying, all the while consciously discredited and dishonored, — or else, putting forth an effort that is a draft on all his nervous energy, he makes merely a decent scholar, and loses his health for life.

Now, if the principle of toleration were once admitted into classical education; if it were admitted that the great object is to read and enjoy a language, and the stress of the teaching were placed on the few things absolutely essential to this result; if the tortoise were allowed time to creep, and the bird permitted to fly, and the fish to swim, towards the enchanted and divine sources of Helicon, — all might in their own way arrive there, and rejoice in its flowers, its beauty, and its coolness.

"But," say the advocates of the present system, "it is good mental discipline."

I doubt it. It is mere waste of time.

When a boy has learned that in the genitive plural of the first declension of Greek nouns the final syllable is circumflexed, but to this there are the following exceptions: 1. That feminine adjectives and participles in -ος, -η, -ον are accented like the genitive masculine, but other feminine adjectives and participles are perispomena in the genitive plural; 2. That the substantives *chrestes, aphue, etesiai,* and *chlounes* in the genitive plural remain paroxytones (Kühner's Elementary Greek Grammar, page 22,) — I say, when a boy has learned this and twenty other things just like it, his mind has not been one whit more disciplined than if he had learned the list of the old thirteen States, the number and names of the newly adopted ones, the times of their adoption, and the population, commerce, mineral

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and agricultural wealth of each. These, too, are merely exercises of memory, but they are exercises in what is of some interest and some use.

The particulars above cited are of so little use in understanding the Greek classics that I will venture to say that there are intelligent English scholars, who have never read anything but Bohn's translations, who have more genuine knowledge of the spirit of the Greek mind, and the peculiar idioms of the language, and more enthusiasm for it, than many a poor fellow who has stumbled blindly through the originals with the bayonet of the tutor at his heels, and his eyes and ears full of the Scotch snuff of the Greek Grammar.

What then? Shall we not learn these ancient tongues? By all means. "So many times as I learn a language, so many times I become a man," said Charles V.; and he said rightly. Latin and Greek are foully belied by the prejudices created by this technical, pedantic mode of teaching them, which makes one ragged, prickly bundle of all the dry facts of the language, and insists upon it that the boy shall not see one glimpse of its beauty, glory, or interest till he has swallowed and digested the whole mass. Many die in this wilderness with their shoes worn out before reaching the Promised Land of Plato and the Tragedians.

"But," say our college authorities, "look at England. An English schoolboy learns three times the Latin and Greek that our boys learn, and has them well drubbed in."

And English boys have three times more beef and pudding in their constitution than American boys have, and three times less of nerves. The difference of nature must be considered here; and the constant influence flowing from English schools and universities must be tempered by considering who we are, what sort of boys we have to deal with, what treatment they can bear, and what are the needs of our growing American society.

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The demands of actual life, the living, visible facts of practical science, in so large and new a country as ours, require that the ideas of the ancients should be given us in the shortest and most economical way possible, and that scholastic technicalities should be reserved to those whom Nature made with especial reference to their preservation.

On no subject is there more intolerant judgment, and more suffering from such intolerance, than on the much mooted one of the education of children. Treatises on education require altogether too much of parents, and impose burdens of responsibility on tender spirits which crush the life and strength out of them. Parents have been talked to as if each child came to them a soft, pulpy mass, which they were to pinch and pull and pat and stroke into shape quite at their leisure, — and a good pattern being placed before them, they were to proceed immediately to set up and construct a good human being in conformity therewith.

It is strange that believers in the divine inspiration of the Bible should have entertained this idea, overlooking the constant and affecting declaration of the great Heavenly Father that He has nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against Him, together with His constant appeals, — "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" If even God, wiser, better, purer, more loving, admits himself baffled in this great work, is it expedient to say to human beings that the forming power, the deciding force, of a child's character is in their hands?

Many a poor, feeble woman's health has been strained to breaking, and her life darkened, by the laying on her shoulders of a burden of responsibility that never ought to have been placed there; and many a mother has been hindered from using such powers as God has given her, because some preconceived mode of operation has been set up

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before her which she could no more make effectual than David could wear the armor of Saul.

A gentle, loving, fragile creature marries a strong-willed, energetic man, and by the laws of natural descent has a boy given to her of twice her amount of will and energy. She is just as helpless, in the mere struggle of will and authority with such a child, as she would be in a physical wrestle with a six-foot man.

What then? Has nature left her helpless for her duties? Not if she understands her nature, and acts in the line of it. She has no power of command, but she has power of persuasion. She can neither bend nor break the boy's iron will, but she can melt it. She has tact to avoid the conflict in which she would be worsted. She can charm, amuse, please, and make willing; and her fine and subtle influences, weaving themselves about him day after day, become more and more powerful. Let her alone, and she will have her boy yet.

But now some bustling mother-in-law, or other privileged expounder, says to her, —

"My dear, it's your solemn duty to break that boy's will. I broke my boy's will short off. Keep your whip in sight, meet him at every turn, fight him whenever he crosses you, never let him get one victory, and finally his will will be wholly subdued."

Such advice is mischievous, because what it proposes is as utter an impossibility to the woman's nature as for a cow to scratch up worms for her calf, or a hen to suckle her chickens.

There are men and women of strong, resolute will who are gifted with the power of governing the wills of others. Such persons can govern in this way, — and their government, being in the line of their nature, acting strongly, consistently, naturally, makes everything move harmoniously. Let them be content with their own success, but let them

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not set up as general education-doctors, or apply their experience to all possible cases.

Again, there are others, and among them some of the loveliest and purest natures, who have no power of command. They have sufficient tenacity of will as respects their own course, but have no compulsory power over the wills of others. Many such women have been most successful mothers, when they followed the line of their own natures, and did not undertake what they never could do.

Influence is a slower acting force than authority. It seems weaker, but in the long run it often effects more. It always does better than mere force and authority without its gentle modifying power.

She who obtains an absolute and perfect government over a child, so that he obeys, certainly and almost mechanically produces effects which are more appreciable in their immediate action on family life; her family will be more orderly, her children in their childhood will do her more credit.

But she who has consciously no power of this kind, whose children are often turbulent and unmanageable, need not despair if she feel that through affection, reason, and conscience, she still retains a strong influence over them. If she cannot govern her boy, she can do even a better thing if she can inspire him with a purpose to govern himself; for a boy taught to govern himself is a better achievement than a boy merely governed.

If a mother, therefore, is high-principled, religious, affectionate, if she never uses craft or deception, if she governs her temper and sets a good example, let her hold on in good hope, though she cannot produce the discipline of a man-of-war in her noisy little flock, or make all move as smoothly as some other women to whom God has given another and different talent; and let her not be discouraged, if she seem often to accomplish but little in that

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arduous work of forming human character wherein the great Creator of the world has declared himself at times baffled.

Family tolerance must take great account of the stages and periods of development and growth in children.

The passage of a human being from one stage of development to another, like the sun's passage across the equator, frequently has its storms and tempests. The change to manhood and womanhood often involves brain, nerves, body, and soul in confusion; the child sometimes seems lost to himself and his parents, — his very nature changing. In this sensitive state come restless desires, unreasonable longings, unsettled purposes; and the fatal habit of indulgence in deadly stimulants, ruining all the life, often springs from the cravings of this transition period.

Here must come in the patience of the saints. The restlessness must be soothed, the family hearth must be tolerant enough to keep there the boy, whom Satan will receive and cherish, if his mother does not. The male element sometimes pours into a boy like the tides in the Bay of Fundy, with tumult and tossing. He is noisy, vociferous, uproarious, and seems bent only on disturbance; he despises conventionalities, he hates parlors, he longs for the woods, the sea, the converse of rough men, and kicks at constraint of all kinds. Have patience now, let love have its perfect work, and in a year or two, if no deadly physical habits set in, a quiet, well-mannered gentleman will be evolved. Meanwhile, if he does not wipe his shoes, and if he will fling his hat upon the floor, and tear his clothes, and bang and hammer and shout, and cause general confusion in his belongings, do not despair; for if you only get your son, the hat and clothes and shoes and noise and confusion do not matter. Any amount of toleration that keeps a boy contented at home is treasure well expended at this time of life.

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One thing not enough reflected on is, that in this transition period between childhood and maturity the heaviest draft and strain of school education occurs. The boy is fitting for the university, the girl going through the studies of the college senior year, and the brain-power, which is working almost to the breaking-point to perfect the physical change, has the additional labor of all the drill and discipline of school.

The girl is growing into a tall and shapely woman, and the poor brain is put to it to find enough phosphate of lime, carbon, and other what-not, to build her fair edifice. The bills flow in upon her thick and fast; she pays out hand over hand: if she had only her woman to build, she might get along, but now come in demands for algebra, geometry, music, language, and the poor brain-bank stops payment; some part of the work is shabbily done, and a crooked spine or weakened lungs are the result.

Boarding-schools, both for boys and girls, are for the most part composed of young people in this most delicate, critical portion of their physical, mental, and moral development, whose teachers are expected to put them through one straight, severe course of drill, without the slightest allowance for the great physical facts of their being. No wonder they are difficult to manage, and that so many of them drop, physically, mentally, and morally halt and maimed. It is not the teacher's fault; he but fulfills the parent's requisition, which dooms his child without appeal to a certain course, simply because others have gone through it.

Finally, as my sermon is too long already, let me end with a single reflection. Every human being has some handle by which he may be lifted, some groove in which he was meant to run; and the great work of life, as far as our relations with each other are concerned, is to lift each one by his own proper handle, and run each one in his own proper groove.

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VI

DISCOURTESY

"For my part," said my wife, "I think one of the greatest destroyers of domestic peace is Discourtesy. People neglect, with their nearest friends, those refinements and civilities which they practice with strangers."

"My dear madam, I am of another opinion," said Bob Stephens. "The restraints of etiquette, the formalities of ceremony, are tedious enough in outdoor life; but when a man comes home, he wants leave to take off his tight boots and gloves, wear the gown and slippers, and speak his mind freely without troubling his head where it hits. Home life should be the communion of people who have learned to understand each other, who allow each other a generous latitude and freedom. One wants one place where he may feel at liberty to be tired or dull or disagreeable without ruining his character. Home is the place where we should expect to live somewhat on the credit which a full knowledge of each other's goodness and worth inspires; and it is not necessary for intimate friends to go through every day those civilities and attentions which they practice with strangers any more than it is necessary among literary people to repeat the alphabet over every day before one begins to read."

"Yes," said Jenny, "when a young gentleman is paying his addresses, he helps a young lady out of a carriage so tenderly, and holds back her dress so adroitly, that not a particle of mud gets on it from the wheels; but when the mutual understanding is complete, and the affection perfect,

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and she is his wife, he sits still and holds the horse and lets her climb out alone. To be sure, when pretty Miss Titmouse is visiting them, he still shows himself gallant, flies from the carriage, and holds back her dress: that 's because he does n't love her, nor she him, and they are *not* on the ground of mutual affection. When a gentleman is only engaged, or a friend, if you hem him a cravat or mend his gloves, he thanks you in the blandest manner; but when you are once sure of his affection, he only says, 'Very well; now I wish you would look over my shirts, and mend that rip in my coat, — and be sure don't forget it, as you did yesterday.' For all which reasons," said Miss Jenny, with a toss of her pretty head, "I mean to put off marrying as long as possible, because I think it far more agreeable to have gentlemen friends with whom I stand on the ground of ceremony and politeness than to be restricted to one who is living on the credit of his affection. I don't want a man who gapes in my face, reads a newspaper all breakfast-time while I want somebody to talk to, smokes cigars all the evening, or reads to himself when I would like him to be entertaining, and considers his affection for me as his right and title to make himself generally disagreeable. If he has a bright face, and pleasant, entertaining, gallant ways, I like to be among the ladies who may have the benefit of them, and should take care how I lost my title to it by coming with him on to the ground of domestic affection."

"Well, Miss Jenny," said Bob, "it is n't merely our sex who are guilty of making themselves less agreeable after marriage. Your dapper little fairy creatures, who dazzle us so with wondrous and fresh toilettes, who are so trim and neat and sprightly and enchanting, what becomes of them after marriage? If *he* reads the newspaper at the breakfast-table, perhaps it 's because there is a sleepy, dowdy woman opposite, in a faded gingham wrapper, put on in the sacredness of domestic privacy, and perhaps she has laid aside

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those crisp, sparkling, bright little sayings and doings that used to make it impossible to look at or listen to anybody else when she was about. Such things are, sometimes, among the goddesses, I believe. Of course, Marianne and I know nothing of these troubles; we, being a model pair, sit among the clouds and speculate on all these matters as spectators merely."

"Well, you see what your principle leads to, carried out," said Jenny. "If home is merely the place where one may feel at liberty to be tired or dull or disagreeable, without losing one's character, I think the women have far more right to avail themselves of the liberty than the men; for all the lonesome, dull, disagreeable part of home life comes into their department. It is they who must keep awake with the baby, if it frets; and if they do not feel spirits to make an attractive toilette in the morning, or have not the airy, graceful fancies that they had when they were girls, it is not so very much against them. A housekeeper and nursery-maid cannot be expected to be quite as elegant in her toilette and as entertaining in her ways as a girl without a care in her father's house; but I think that this is no excuse for husbands neglecting the little civilities and attentions which they used to show before marriage. They are strong and well and hearty; go out into the world and hear and see a great deal that keeps their minds moving and awake; and they ought to entertain their wives after marriage just as their wives entertained them before. That's the way my husband must do, or I will never have one, — and it will be small loss if I don't," said Miss Jenny.

"Well," said Bob, "I must endeavor to initiate Charley Sedley in time."

"Charley Sedley, Bob!" said Jenny, with crimson indignation. "I wonder you will always bring up that old story, when I've told you a hundred times how disagreeable it is! Charley and I are good friends, but" —

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"There, there," said Bob, "that will do; you don't need to proceed further."

"You only said that because you could n't answer my argument," said Jenny.

"Well, my dear," said Bob, "you know everything has two sides to it, and I 'll admit that you have brought up the opposite side to mine quite handsomely; but, for all that, I am convinced that, if what I said was not really the truth, yet the truth lies somewhere in the vicinity of it. As I said before, so I say again, true love ought to beget a freedom which shall do away with the necessity of ceremony, and much may and ought to be tolerated among near and dear friends that would be discourteous among strangers. I am just as sure of this as of anything in the world."

"And yet," said my wife, "there is certainly truth in the much quoted lines of Cowper, on Friendship, where he says, —

> "As similarity of mind,
> Or something not to be defined,
> First fixes our attention,
> So manners decent and polite,
> The same we practiced at first sight,
> Will save it from declension."

"Well, now," said Bob, "I 've seen enough of French politeness between married people. When I was in Paris, I remember there was in our boarding-house a Madame de Villiers, whose husband had conferred upon her his name and the *de* belonging to it, in consideration of a snug little income which she brought to him by the marriage. His conduct towards her was a perfect model of all the graces of civilized life. It was true that he lived on her income, and spent it in promenading the Boulevards, and visiting theatres and operas with divers fair friends of easy morals; still all this was so courteously, so politely, so diplomatically arranged with Madame, that it was quite worth while to be neglected and cheated for the sake of having the

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thing done in so finished and elegant a manner. According to his showing, Monsieur had taken the neat little apartment for her in our *pension*, because his circumstances were embarrassed, and he would be in despair to drag such a creature into hardships which he described as terrific, and which he was resolved heroically to endure alone. No; while a sous remained to them, his adored Julie should have her apartment and the comforts of life secured to her, while the barest attic should suffice for him. Never did he visit her without kissing her hand with the homage due to a princess, complimenting her on her good looks, bringing bonbons, entertaining her with most ravishing small-talk of all the interesting *on-dits* in Paris; and these visits were most particularly frequent as the time for receiving her quarterly installments approached. And so Madame adored him and could refuse him nothing, believed all his stories, and was well content to live on a fourth of her own income for the sake of so engaging a husband."

"Well," said Jenny, "I don't know to what purpose your anecdote is related, but to me it means simply this: if a rascal, without heart, without principle, without any good quality, can win and keep a woman's heart merely by being invariably polite and agreeable, while in her presence, how much more might a man of sense and principle and real affection do by the same means! I 'm sure, if a man who neglects a woman, and robs her of her money, nevertheless keeps her affections, merely because whenever he sees her he is courteous and attentive, it certainly shows that courtesy stands for a great deal in the matter of love."

"With foolish women," said Bob.

"Yes, and with sensible ones too," said my wife. "Your Monsieur presents a specimen of the French way of doing a bad thing; but I know a poor woman whose husband did the same thing in English fashion, without kisses or compliments. Instead of flattering, he swore at her, and

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took her money away without the ceremony of presenting bonbons; and I assure you, if the thing must be done at all, I would, for my part, much rather have it done in the French than the English manner. The courtesy, as far as it goes, is a good, and far better than nothing, — though, of course, one would rather have substantial good with it. If one must be robbed, one would rather have one's money wheedled away agreeably, with kisses and bonbons, than be knocked down and trampled upon."

"The mistake that is made on this subject," said I, "is in comparing, as people generally do, a polished rascal with a boorish good man; but the polished rascal should be compared with the polished good man, and the boorish rascal with the boorish good man, and then we get the true value of the article.

"It is true, as a general rule, that those races of men that are most distinguished for outward urbanity and courtesy are the least distinguished for truth and sincerity; and hence the well-known alliterations, 'fair and false,' 'smooth and slippery.' The fair and false Greek, the polished and wily Italian, the courteous and deceitful Frenchman, are associations which, to the strong, downright, courageous Anglo-Saxon, make up-and-down rudeness and blunt discourtesy a type of truth and honesty.

"No one can read French literature without feeling how the element of courtesy pervades every department of life, — how carefully people avoid being personally disagreeable in their intercourse. A domestic quarrel, if we may trust French plays, is carried on with all the refinements of good breeding, and insults are given with elegant civility. It seems impossible to translate into French the direct and downright brutalities which the English tongue allows. The whole intercourse of life is arranged on the understanding that all personal contacts shall be smooth and civil, and such as to obviate the necessity of personal jostle and jar.

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"Does a Frenchman engage a clerk or other employee, and afterwards hear a report to his disadvantage, the last thing he would think of would be to tell a downright unpleasant truth to the man. He writes him a civil note, and tells him, that, in consequence of an unexpected change of business, he shall not need an assistant in that department, and much regrets that this will deprive him of Monsieur's agreeable society, etc.

"A more striking example cannot be found of this sort of intercourse than the representation in the life of Madame George Sand of the proceedings between her father and his mother. There is all the romance of affection between this mother and son. He writes her the most devoted letters, he kisses her hand on every page, he is the very image of a gallant, charming, lovable son, while at the same time he is secretly making arrangements for a private marriage with a woman of low rank and indifferent reputation, — a marriage which he knows would be like death to his mother. He marries, lives with his wife, has one or two children by her, before he will pain the heart of his adored mother by telling her the truth. The adored mother suspects her son, but no trace of the suspicion appears in her letters to him. The questions which an English parent would level at him point-blank she is entirely too delicate to address to her dear Maurice; but she puts them to the Prefect of Police, and ferrets out the marriage through legal documents, while yet no trace of this knowledge dims the affectionateness of her letters, or the serenity of her reception of her son when he comes to bestow on her the time which he can spare from his family cares. In an English or American family there would have been a battle royal, an open rupture; whereas this courteous son and mother go on for years with this polite drama, she pretending to be deceived while she is not, and he supposing that he is sparing her feelings by the deception.

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"Now it is the reaction from such a style of life on the truthful Anglo-Saxon nature that leads to an undervaluing of courtesy, as if it were of necessity opposed to sincerity. But it does not follow, because all is not gold that glitters, that nothing that glitters is gold, and because courtesy and delicacy of personal intercourse are often perverted to deceit, that they are not valuable allies of truth. No woman would prefer a slippery, plausible rascal to a rough, unceremonious honest man; but of two men equally truthful and affectionate, every woman would prefer the courteous one."

"Well," said Bob, "there is a loathsome, sickly stench of cowardice and distrust about all this kind of French delicacy that is enough to drive an honest fellow to the other extreme. True love ought to be a robust, hardy plant, that can stand a free outdoor life of sun and wind and rain. People who are too delicate and courteous ever fully to speak their minds to each other are apt to have stagnant residuums of unpleasant feelings which breed all sorts of gnats and mosquitos. My rule is, Say everything out as you go along; have your little tiffs, and get over them; jar and jolt and rub a little, and learn to take rubs and bear jolts.

"If I take less thought and use less civility of expression, in announcing to Marianne that her coffee is roasted too much, than I did to old Mrs. Pollux when I boarded with her, it's because I take it Marianne is somewhat more a part of myself than old Mrs Pollux was, — that there is an intimacy and confidence between us which will enable us to use the shorthand of life, — that she will not fall into a passion or fly into hysterics, but will merely speak to cook, in good time. If I don't thank her for mending my glove in just the style that I did when I was a lover, it is because now she does that sort of thing for me so often that it would be a downright bore to her to have me always on my knees about it. All that I could think of to say about her

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graceful handiness and her delicate needlework has been said so often, and is so well understood, that it has entirely lost the zest of originality. Marianne and I have had sundry little battles, in which the victory came out on both sides, each of us thinking the better of the other for the vigor and spirit with which we conducted matters, and our habit of perfect plain-speaking and truth-telling to each other is better than all the delicacies that ever were hatched up in the hot-bed of French sentiment."

"Perfectly true, perfectly right," said I. "Every word good as gold. Truth before all things; sincerity before all things: pure, clear, diamond-bright sincerity is of more value than the gold of Ophir; the foundation of all love must rest here. How those people do who live in the nearest and dearest intimacy with friends who they believe will lie to them for any purpose, even the most refined and delicate, is a mystery to me. If I once know that my wife or my friend will tell me only what they think will be agreeable to me, then I am at once lost, my way is a pathless quicksand. But all this being premised, I still say that we Anglo-Saxons might improve our domestic life, if we would graft upon the strong stock of its homely sincerity the courteous graces of the French character.

"If anybody wishes to know exactly what I mean by this, let him read the Memoir of De Tocqueville, whom I take to be the representative of the French ideal man; and certainly the kind of family life which his domestic letters disclose has a delicacy and a beauty which adorn its solid worth.

"What I have to say on this matter is, that it is very dangerous for any individual man or any race of men continually to cry up the virtues to which they are constitutionally inclined, and to be constantly dwelling with reprobation on faults to which they have no manner of temptation.

"I think that we of the English race may set it down as

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a general rule, that we are in no danger of becoming hypocrites in domestic life through an extra sense of politeness, and in some danger of becoming boors from a rough, uncultivated instinct of sincerity. But to bring the matter to a practical point, I will specify some particulars in which the courtesy we show to strangers might with advantage be grafted into our home life.

"In the first place, then, let us watch our course when we are entertaining strangers whose good opinion we wish to propitiate. We dress ourselves with care, we study what it will be agreeable to say, we do not suffer our natural laziness to prevent our being very alert in paying small attentions, we start across the room for an easier chair, we stoop to pick up the fan, we search for the mislaid newspaper, and all this for persons in whom we have no particular interest beyond the passing hour; while with those friends whom we love and respect we too often sit in our old faded habiliments, and let them get their own chair, and look up their own newspaper, and fight their own way daily, without any of this preventing care.

"In the matter of personal adornment, especially, there are a great many people who are chargeable with the same fault that I have already spoken of in reference to household arrangements. They have a splendid wardrobe for company, and a shabby and sordid one for domestic life. A woman puts all her income into party dresses, and thinks anything will do to wear at home. All her old tumbled finery, her frayed, dirty silks and soiled ribbons, are made to do duty for her hours of intercourse with her dearest friends. Some seem to be really principled against wearing a handsome dress in every-day life; they 'cannot afford' to be well-dressed in private. Now what I should recommend would be to take the money necessary for one or two party dresses and spend it upon an appropriate and tasteful home toilette, and to make it an avowed object to look prettily at home.

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"We men are a sort of stupid, blind animals: we know when we are pleased, but we don't know what it is that pleases us; we say we don't care anything about flowers, but if there is a flower-garden under our window, somehow or other we are dimly conscious of it, and feel that there is something pleasant there; and so when our wives and daughters are prettily and tastefully attired, we know it, and it gladdens our life far more than we are perhaps aware of."

"Well, papa," said Jenny, "I think the men ought to take just as much pains to get themselves up nicely after marriage as the women. I think there are such things as tumbled shirt-collars and frowsy hair and muddy shoes brought into the domestic sanctuary, as well as frayed silks and dirty ribbons."

"Certainly," I said; "but you know we are the natural Hottentot, and you are the missionaries who are to keep us from degenerating; we are the clumsy, old, blind Vulcan, and you the fair Cythereas, the bearers of the magic cestus, and therefore it is to you that this head more particularly belongs.

"Now I maintain that in family life there should be an effort not only to be neat and decent in the arrangement of our person, but to be also what the French call coquette, — or to put it in plain English, there should be an endeavor to make ourselves look handsome in the eyes of our dearest friends.

"Many worthy women, who would not for the world be found wanting in the matter of personal neatness, seem somehow to have the notion that any study of the arts of personal beauty in family life is unmatronly; they buy their clothes with simple reference to economy, and have them made up without any question of becomingness; and hence marriage sometimes transforms a charming, trim, tripping young lady into a waddling matron whose every-day toilette

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suggests only the idea of a feather-bed tied round with a string. For my part, I do not believe that the summary banishment of the Graces from the domestic circle as soon as the first baby makes its appearance is at all conducive to domestic affection. Nor do I think that there is any need of so doing. These good housewives are in danger, like other saints, of falling into the error of neglecting the body, through too much thoughtfulness for others and too little for themselves. If a woman ever had any attractiveness, let her try and keep it, setting it down as one of her domestic talents. As for my erring brothers who violate the domestic sanctuary by tousled hair, tumbled linen, and muddy shoes, I deliver them over to Miss Jenny without benefit of clergy.

"My second head is, that there should be in family life the same delicacy in the avoidance of disagreeable topics that characterizes the intercourse of refined society among strangers.

"I do not think that it makes family life more sincere, or any more honest, to have the members of a domestic circle feel a freedom to blurt out in each other's faces, without thought or care, all the disagreeable things that may occur to them: as, for example, 'How horridly you look this morning! What's the matter with you?' — 'Is there a pimple coming on your nose? or what is that spot?' — 'What made you buy such a dreadfully unbecoming dress? It sets like a witch! Who cut it?' — 'What makes you wear that pair of old shoes?' — 'Hollo, Bess! is that your party-rig? I should think you were going out for a walking advertisement of a flower-store!' — Observations of this kind between husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, or intimate friends, do not indicate sincerity, but obtuseness; and the person who remarks on the pimple on your nose is in many cases just as apt to deceive you as the most accomplished Frenchwoman who avoids disagreeable topics in your presence.

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"Many families seem to think that it is a proof of family union and good-nature that they can pick each other to pieces, joke on each other's feelings and infirmities, and treat each other with a general tally-ho-ing rudeness without any offense or ill-feeling. If there is a limping sister, there is a never-failing supply of jokes on 'Dot-and-go-one;' and so with other defects and peculiarities of mind or manners. Now the perfect good-nature and mutual confidence which allow all this liberty are certainly admirable; but the liberty itself is far from making home life interesting or agreeable.

"Jokes upon personal or mental infirmities, and a general habit of saying things in jest which would be the height of rudeness if said in earnest, are all habits which take from the delicacy of family affection.

"In all this rough playing with edge-tools many are hit and hurt who are ashamed or afraid to complain. And after all, what possible good or benefit comes from it? Courage to say disagreeable things, when it is necessary to say them for the highest good of the person addressed, is a sublime quality; but a careless habit of saying them, in the mere freedom of family intercourse, is certainly as great a spoiler of the domestic vines as any fox running.

"There is one point under this head which I enlarge upon for the benefit of my own sex: I mean table criticisms. The conduct of housekeeping, in the present state of domestic service, certainly requires great allowance; and the habit of unceremonious comment on the cooking and appointments of the table, in which some husbands habitually allow themselves, is the most unpardonable form of domestic rudeness. If a wife has philosophy enough not to mind it, so much the worse for her husband, as it confirms him in an unseemly habit, embarrassing to guests and a bad example to children. If she has no feelings that he is bound to respect, he should at least respect decorum and

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good taste, and confine the discussion of such matters to private intercourse, and not initiate every guest and child into the grating and greasing of the wheels of the domestic machinery.

"Another thing in which families might imitate the politeness of strangers is a wise reticence with regard to the asking of questions and the offering of advice.

"A large family includes many persons of different tastes, habits, modes of thinking and acting, and it would be wise and well to leave to each one that measure of freedom in these respects which the laws of general politeness require. Brothers and sisters may love each other very much, and yet not enough to make joint-stock of all their ideas, plans, wishes, schemes, friendships. There are in every family circle individuals whom a certain sensitiveness of nature inclines to quietness and reserve; and there are very well-meaning families where no such quietness or reserve is possible. Nobody can be let alone, nobody may have a secret, nobody can move in any direction, without a host of inquiries and comments. 'Who is your letter from? Let's see.' — 'My letter is from So-and-So.' — '*He* writing to you! I didn't know that. What's he writing about?' — 'Where did you go yesterday? What did you buy? What did you give for it? What are you going to do with it?' — 'Seems to me that's an odd way to do. I should n't do so.' — 'Look here, Mary; Sarah 's going to have a dress of silk tissue this spring. Now I think they 're too dear, — don't you?'

"I recollect seeing in some author a description of a true gentleman, in which, among other traits, he was characterized as the man that asks the fewest questions. This trait of refined society might be adopted into home life in a far greater degree than it is, and make it far more agreeable.

"If there is perfect unreserve and mutual confidence, let it show itself in free communications coming unsolicited.

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It may fairly be presumed that, if there is anything our intimate friends wish us to know, they will tell us of it, — and that when we are on close and confidential terms with persons, and there are topics on which they do not speak to us, it is because for some reason they prefer to keep silence concerning them; and the delicacy that respects a friend's silence is one of the charms of life.

"As with the asking of questions, so with the offering of advice, there should be among friends a wise reticence.

"Some families are always calling each other to account at every step of the way. 'What did you put on that dress for? Why did n't you wear that?' — 'What did you do this for? Why did n't you do that?' — 'Now *I* should advise you to do thus and so.' — And these comments and criticisms and advices are accompanied with an energy of feeling that makes it rather difficult to disregard them.

"Now it is no matter how dear and how good our friends may be, if they abridge our liberty and fetter the free exercise of our life, it is inevitable that we shall come to enjoying ourselves much better where they are not than where they are; and one of the reasons why brothers and sisters or children so often diverge from the family circle in the choice of confidants is, that extraneous friends are bound by certain laws of delicacy not to push inquiries, criticisms, or advice too far.

"Parents would do well to remember in time when their children have grown up into independent human beings, and use with a wise moderation those advisory and admonitory powers with which they guided their earlier days. Let us give everybody a right to live his own life, as far as possible, and avoid imposing our own personalities on another.

"If I were to picture a perfect family, it should be a union of people of individual and marked character, who through love have come to a perfect appreciation of each

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other, and who so wisely understand themselves and one another that each may move freely along his or her own track without jar or jostle, — a family where affection is always sympathetic and receptive, but never inquisitive, where all personal delicacies are respected, and where there is a sense of privacy and seclusion in following one's own course, unchallenged by the watchfulness of others, yet withal a sense of society and support in a knowledge of the kind dispositions and interpretations of all around.

"In treating of family discourtesies, I have avoided speaking of those which come from ill-temper and brute selfishness, because these are sins more than mistakes. An angry person is generally impolite; and where contention and ill-will are, there can be no courtesy. What I have mentioned are rather the lackings of good and often admirable people, who merely need to consider in their family life a little more of whatsoever things are lovely. With such the mere admission of anything to be pursued as a duty secures the purpose; only in their somewhat earnest pursuit of the substantials of life they drop and pass by the little things that give it sweetness and perfume. To such a word is enough, and that word is said."

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VII

EXACTINGNESS

At length I am arrived at my seventh fox, — the last of the domestic quadrupeds against which I have vowed a crusade, — and here opens the chase of him. I call him

EXACTINGNESS,

and having done this, I drop the metaphor, for fear of chasing it beyond the rules of graceful rhetoric, and shall proceed to define the trait.

All the other domestic faults of which I have treated have relation to the manner in which the ends of life are pursued; but this one is an underlying, false, and diseased state of conception as to the very ends and purposes of life itself.

If a piano is tuned to exact concert pitch, the majority of voices must fall below it; for which reason, most people indulgently allow their pianos to be tuned a little below this point, in accommodation to the average power of the human voice. Persons of only ordinary powers of voice would be considered absolute monomaniacs, who should insist on having their pianos tuned to accord with any abstract notion of propriety or perfection, — rendering themselves wretched by persistently singing all their pieces miserably out of tune in consequence.

Yet there are persons who keep the requirements of life strained up always at concert pitch, and are thus worn out and made miserable all their days by the grating of a perpetual discord.

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There is a faculty of the human mind to which phrenologists have given the name of Ideality, which is at the foundation of this exactingness. Ideality is the faculty by which we conceive of and long for perfection; and at a glance it will be seen, that, so far from being an evil ingredient of human nature, it is the one element of progress that distinguishes man's nature from that of the brute. While animals go on from generation to generation, learning nothing and forgetting nothing, practicing their small circle of the arts of life no better and no worse from year to year, man is driven by ideality to constant invention and alteration, whence come arts, sciences, and the whole progress of society. Ideality induces discontent with present attainments, possessions, and performances, and hence come better and better ones. So in morals, ideality constantly incites to higher and nobler modes of living and thinking, and is the faculty to which the most effective teachings of the great Master of Christianity are addressed. To be dissatisfied with present attainments, with earthly things and scenes, to aspire and press on to something forever fair, yet forever receding before our steps, — this is the teaching of Christianity, and the work of the Christian.

But every faculty has its own instinctive, wild growth, which, like the spontaneous produce of the earth, is crude and weedy.

Revenge, says Lord Bacon, is a sort of wild justice, obstinacy is untutored firmness, — and so exactingness is untrained ideality; and a vast deal of misery, social and domestic, comes not of the faculty, but of its untrained exercise.

The faculty which is ever conceiving and desiring something better and more perfect must be modified in its action by good sense, patience, and conscience, or it induces a morbid, discontented spirit, which courses through the veins of individual and family life like a subtle poison.

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In a certain neighborhood are two families whose social and domestic animus illustrates the difference between ideality and the want of it.

The Daytons are a large, easy-natured, joyous race, hospitable, kindly, and friendly. Nothing about their establishment is much above mediocrity. The grounds are tolerably kept, the table is tolerably fair, the servants moderately good, and the family character and attainments of the same average level.

Mrs. Dayton is a decent housekeeper, and so her bread be not sour, her butter not frowy, the food abundant and the tablecloth and dishes clean, she troubles her head little with the niceties and refinements of the ménage. She accepts her children as they come from the hand of nature, simply opening her eyes to discern what they *are*, never raising the query what she would have had them, — forming no very high expectations concerning them and well content with whatever develops.

A visitor in the family can easily see a thousand defects in the conduct of affairs, in the management of the children, and in this, that and the other portion of the household arrangements; but he can see and feel, also, a perfect comfortableness in the domestic atmosphere that almost atones for any defects. He can see that in a thousand respects things might be better done, if the family were not perfectly content to have them as they are, and that each individual member might make higher attainments in various directions, were there not such entire satisfaction with what is already attained.

Trying each other by very moderate standards and measurements, there is great mutual complacency. The oldest boy does not get an appointment in college, — they never expected he would; but he was a respectable scholar, and they receive him with acclamations such as another family would bestow on a valedictorian. The daughters do not profess,

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as we are told, to draw like artists, but some very moderate performances in the line of the fine arts are dwelt on with much innocent pleasure. They thrum a few tunes on the piano, and the whole family listen and approve. All unite in singing in a somewhat uncultured manner a few psalm-tunes or songs, and take more comfort in them than many amateurs do in their well-drilled performances.

So goes the world with the Daytons; and when you visit them, if you often feel that you could ask more and suggest much improvement, yet you cannot help enjoying the quiet satisfaction which breathes around you.

Now right across the way from the Daytons live the Mores; and the Mores are the very opposites of the Daytons. Everything about their establishment is brought to the highest point of culture. The carriage drive never shows a weed, the lawn is velvet, the flower beds ever-blooming, the fruit-trees and vines grow exactly like the patterns in the best pomological treatises. Within doors the housekeeping is faultless, — all seems to be moving in time and tune, the table is more than good, it is superlative, every article is in its way a model; the children appear to you to be growing up after the most patent-right method, duly trained, snipped, and cultured, like the pear-trees and grapevines. Nothing is left to accident, or done without much laborious consideration of the best manner of doing it; and the consequences, in the eyes of their simple, unsophisticated neighbors, are very wonderful.

Nevertheless this is not a happy family. All their perfections do not begin to afford them one tithe of the satisfaction that the Daytons derive from their ragged and scrambling performances.

The two daughters, Jane and Maria, had naturally very sweet voices, and when they were little, trilled tunes in a very pleasant and bird-like manner. But now, having been instructed by the best masters, and heard the very first ar-

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tists, they never sing or play; the piano is shut, and their voices are dumb. If you request a song, they tell you that they never sing now; papa has such an exquisite taste, he takes no interest in any common music; in short, having heard Jenny Lind, Grisi, Alboni, Mario, and others of the tuneful shell, this family have concluded to abide in silence. As to any music that they could make, it is n't to be thought of.

For the same reason, the daughters, after attending a quarter or two on the drawing-exercises of a celebrated teacher, threw up their pencils in disgust, and tore up very pretty and agreeable sketches which were the marvel of their good-natured admiring neighbors. If they could draw like Signor Scratchalini, if they could hope to become perfect artists, they tell you, they would have persevered; but they have taken lessons enough to learn that drawing is the labor of a lifetime, and, not having a lifetime to give to it, they resolve to do nothing at all.

They have also, for a similar reason, given up letter-writing. If their chirography were as elegant as Charlotte Cushman's, — if they were perfect mistresses of polite English, if they were gifted with wit, humor, and fancy, like the first masters of style, — they would take pleasure in epistolary composition, and be good correspondents; but anything short of that is so intolerable, that, except in cases of life and death or urgent business, you cannot get a line out of them. Yet they write very fair, agreeable, womanly letters, and would write much better ones, if they allowed themselves a little more practice.

Mrs. More is devoured by care. She sits with a clouded brow in her elegant, well-regulated house; and when you talk with her, you are surprised to learn that everything in it is in the most dreadful disorder from one end to the other. You ask for particulars, and find that the disorder has relation to exquisite standards of the ways of doing

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things, derived from observation of life in the most subdivided state of European service, — to all of which she has not as yet been able to raise her domestics. You compliment her on her cook, and she responds, in plaintive accents, "She can do a few things decently, but she is nothing of a cook." You refer with enthusiasm to her bread, her coffee, her muffins and hot rolls, and she listens and sighs. "Yes," she admits, "these are eatable, — not bad; but you should have seen the rolls at a certain café in Paris, and the bread at a certain nobleman's in England, where they had a bakery in the castle, and a French baker, who did nothing all the while but to refine and perfect the idea of bread. When she thinks of these things, everything in comparison is so coarse and rough! — but then she has learned to be comfortable." Thus, in every department of housekeeping, to this too well-instructed person,

"Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise."

Not a thing in her wide and apparently beautifully kept establishment is ever done well enough to elicit from her more than a sigh of toleration. "I suppose it must do," she faintly breathes, when poor human nature, having tried and tried again, evidently has got to the boundaries of its capabilities; "you may let it go, Jane; I never expect to be suited."

The poor woman, in the midst of possessions and attainments which excite the envy of her neighbors, is utterly restless and wretched, and feels herself always baffled and unsuccessful. Her exacting nature makes her dissatisfied with herself in everything that she undertakes, and equally dissatisfied with others. In the whole family there is little of that pleasure which comes from the consciousness of mutual admiration and esteem, because each one is pitched to so exquisite a tone that each is afraid to touch another for fear of making discord. They are afraid of each other everywhere. They cannot sing to each other, play to each other,

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write to each other; they cannot even converse together with any freedom, because each knows that the others are so dismally well informed and critically instructed.

Though all agree in a secret contempt for their neighbors over the way, as living in a most heathenish state of ignorant contentment, yet it is a fact that the elegant brother John will often, on the sly, slip into the Daytons' to spend an evening, and join them in singing glees and catches to their old rattling piano, and have a jolly time of it, which he remembers in contrast with the dull, silent hours at home. Kate Dayton has an uncultivated voice, which often falls from pitch; but she has a perfectly infectious gayety of good-nature, and when she is once at the piano, and all join in some merry troll, he begins to think that there may be something better even than good singing; and then they have dances and charades and games, all in such contented, jolly, impromptu ignorance of the unities of time, place, and circumstance, that he sometimes doubts, where ignorance is such bliss, whether it is n't in truth folly to be wise.

Jane and Maria laugh at John for his partiality to the Daytons, and yet they themselves feel the same attraction. At the Daytons' they somehow find themselves heroines; their drawings are so admired, their singing is so charming to these simple ears, that they are often beguiled into giving pleasure with their own despised acquirements; and Jane, somehow, is very tolerant of the devoted attention of Will Dayton, a joyous, honest-hearted fellow, whom, in her heart of hearts, she likes none the worse for being unexacting and simple enough to think her a wonder of taste and accomplishments. Will, of course, is the farthest possible from the Admirable Crichtons and exquisite Sir Philip Sidneys whom Mrs. More and the young ladies talk up at their leisure, and adorn with feathers from every royal and celestial bird, when they are discussing theoretic possible husbands. He is not in any way distinguished, except for

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a kind heart, strong native good sense, and a manly energy that has carried him straight into the very heart of many a citadel of life, before which the superior and more refined Mr. John had set himself down, to deliberate upon the best and most elegant way of taking it. Will's plain, homely intelligence has often in five minutes disentangled some ethereal snarl in which these exquisite Mores had spun themselves up, and brought them to his own way of thinking by that sort of disenchanting process which honest, practical sense sometimes exerts over ideality.

The fact is, however, that in each of these families there is a natural defect which requires something from the other for completeness. Taking happiness as the standard, the Daytons have it as against the Mores. Taking attainment as the standard, the Mores have it as against the Daytons. A portion of the discontented ideality of the Mores would stimulate the Daytons to refine and perfect many things which might easily be made better, did they care enough to have them so; and a portion of the Daytons' self-satisfied contentment would make the attainments and refinements of the Mores of some practical use in advancing their own happiness.

But between these two classes of natures lies another, to which has been given an equal share of ideality, — in which the conception and the desire of excellence are equally strong, but in which a discriminating common-sense acts like a balance-wheel in machinery. What is the reason that the most exacting idealists never make themselves unhappy about not being able to fly like a bird or swim like a fish? Because common-sense teaches them that these accomplishments are so utterly out of the question that they never arise to the mind as objects of desire. In these well-balanced minds we speak of, common-sense runs an instinctive line all through life between the attainable and the unattainable, and sets the key of desire accordingly.

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Common-sense teaches that there is no one branch of human art or science in which perfection is not a point forever receding. A botanist gravely assures us, that to become perfect in the knowledge of one branch of seaweeds would take all the time and strength of a man for a lifetime. There is no limit to music, to the fine arts. There is never a time when the gardener can rest, saying that his garden is perfect. Housekeeping, cooking, sewing, knitting may all, for aught we know, be pushed on forever, without exhausting the capabilities for better doing.

But while attainment in everything is endless, circumstances forbid the greater part of human beings from attaining in any direction the half of what they see would be desirable; and the difference between the miserable idealist and the contented realist often is, not that both do not see what needs to be done for perfection, but that, seeing it, one is satisfied with the attainable, and the other forever frets and wears himself out on the unattainable.

The principal of a large and complicated public institution was complimented on maintaining such uniformity of cheerfulness amid such a diversity of cares. "I've made up my mind to be satisfied, when things are done *half* as well as I would have them," was his answer; and the same philosophy would apply with cheering results to the domestic sphere.

There is a saying which one often hears among common people, that such and such a one are persons who never could be happy, unless everything went "just so," — that is, in accordance with their highest conceptions.

When these persons are women, and undertake the sway of a home empire, they are sure to be miserable, and to make others so; for home is a place where by no kind of magic possible to woman can everything be always made to go "just so."

We may read treatises on education, — and very excel-

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lent ones there are. We may read very nice stories illustrating home management, in which book-children and book-servants all work into the author's plan with obliging unanimity; but every real child and real servant is an uncompromising fact, whose working into our ideal of life cannot be predicted with any degree of certainty. A husband is another absolute fact, of whose conformity to any ideal conceptions no positive account can be given. So, when a person has the most charming theories of education, the most complete ideals of life, it is often his lot to sit bound hand and foot and see them all trampled under the heel of opposing circumstances.

Nothing is easier than to make an ideal garden. We lay out our grounds, dig, plant, transplant, manure. We read catalogues of roses till we are bewildered with their lustrous glories. We set out plum, pear, and peach, we luxuriate in advance on bushels of choicest grapes, and our theoretic garden is Paradise Regained. But in the actual garden there are cut-worms for every cabbage, squash-bugs for all the melons, slugs and rose-bugs for the roses, curculios for the plums, fire-blight for pears, yellows for peaches, mildew for grapes, and late and early frosts, droughts, winds, and hailstorms here and there for all.

The garden and the family are fair pictures of each other. Both are capable of the most ravishing representations on paper; and the rules and directions for creating beauty and perfection in both can be made so apparently plain that he who runneth may read, and it would seem that a fool need not err therein; and yet the actual results are always halting miles away behind expectation and desire.

It would be an incalculable gain to domestic happiness, if people would begin the concert of life with their instruments tuned to a very low pitch: they who receive the most happiness are generally they who demand and expect the least.

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Ideality often becomes an insidious mental and moral disease, acting all the more subtly from its alliances with what is highest and noblest within us. Shall we not aspire to be perfect? Shall we be content with low measures and low standards in anything? To these inquiries there seems of course to be but one answer; yet the individual driven forward in blind, unreasoning aspiration becomes wearied, bewildered, discontented, restless, fretful, and miserable.

An unhappy person can never make others happy. The creators and governors of a home, who are themselves restless and inharmonious, cannot make harmony and peace. This is the secret reason why many a pure, good conscientious person is only a source of uneasiness in family life. They are exacting, discontented, unhappy; and spread the discontent and unhappiness about them. They are, to begin with, on poor terms with themselves; they do not like themselves; they do not like their own appearance, manners, education, accomplishments; on all these points they try themselves by ideal standards, and find themselves wanting. In morals, in religion, too, the same introverted scrutiny detects only errors and evils, till all life seems to them a miserable, hopeless failure, and they wish they had never been born. They are angry and disgusted with themselves; there is no self-toleration or self-endurance. And persons in a chronic quarrel with themselves are very apt to quarrel with others. That exacting nature which has no patience with one's own inevitable frailties and errors has none for those of others; and thus the great motive by which Christianity enforces tolerance of the faults of others loses its hold. There are people who make no allowances either for themselves or anybody else, but are equally angry and disgusted with both.

Now it is important that those finely strung natures in which ideality largely predominates should begin life by a religious care and restraint of this faculty. As the case

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often stands, however, religion only intensifies the difficulty, by adding stringency to exaction and censoriousness, driving the subject up with an unremitting strain till the very cords of reason sometimes snap. Yet, properly understood and used, religion is the only cure for the evil of diseased ideality. The Christian religion is the only one that ever proposed to give to all human beings, however various the range of their nature and desires, the great underlying gift of rest. Its Author, with a strength of assurance which only supreme Divinity can justify, promises rest to all persons, under all circumstances, with all sorts of natures, all sorts of wants, and all sorts of defects. The invitation is as wide as the human race: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you REST."

Now this is the more remarkable, as this gracious promise is accompanied by the presentation of a standard of perfection which is more ideal and exacting than any other that has ever been placed before mankind, — which, in so many words, sets up absolute perfection as the only true goal of aspiration.

The problem which Jesus proposes to human nature is endless aspiration steadied by endless peace, — a perfectly restful, yet unceasing effort after a good, which is never to be attained till we attain a higher and more perfect form of existence. It is because this problem is insolvable by any human wisdom, that He says that they who take His yoke upon them must learn of Him, for He alone can make the perfect yoke easy and its burden light.

The first lesson in this benignant school must lie like a strong, broad foundation under every structure on which we wish to rear a happy life, — and that is, that the full gratification of the faculty of ideality is never to be expected in this present stage of existence, but is to be transferred to a future life. Ideality, with its incessant, restless longings and yearnings, is snubbed and turned out of doors

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by human philosophy, when philosophy becomes middle-aged and sulky with repeated disappointments, — it is berated as a cheat and a liar, — told to hold its tongue and take itself elsewhere; but Christianity bids it be of good cheer, still to aspire and hope and prophesy, and points to a future where all its dreams shall be outdone by reality.

A full faith in such a perfect future — a perfect faith that God has planted in man no desire which he cannot train to complete enjoyment in that future — gives the mind rest and contentment to postpone for a while gratifications that will certainly come at last.

Such a faith is better even than that native philosophical good sense which restrains the ideal calculations and hopes of some; for it has a wider scope and a deeper power.

We have seen in our time a woman gifted with all those faculties which rejoice in the refinements of society, dispensing the elegant hospitalities of a beautiful home, joyful and giving joy. A sudden reverse has swept all this away, the wealth on which it was based has melted like a fog-bank in a warm morning, and we have seen her with her little family beginning life again in the log-cabin of a Western settlement. We have seen her sitting in the door of the one room that took the place of parlor, bedroom, nursery, and cheerfully making her children's morning toilette by the help of the one tin wash-bowl that takes the place of her well-arranged bathing and dressing rooms; and yet, as she twined their curls over her fingers, she had a laugh and a jest and cheerful word for all. The few morning-glories that she was training over her rude porch seemed as much a source of delight to her as her former greenhouse and garden; and the adjustment of the one or two shelves whereon were the half-dozen books left of the library, her husband's private papers, and her own and her children's wardrobe, was entered into daily with a zealous interest as if she had never known a wider sphere.

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Such facility of accommodation to life's reverses is sometimes supposed to be merely the result of a hopeful and cheerful temperament; in this case it was purely the work of religion. In early life, this same woman had been the discontented slave of ideality, had sighed with vain longings in the midst of real and substantial comfort, had felt even the creasing of the rose-leaves of her pillow an intolerable annoyance. Now she has resigned herself to the work and toil of life as the soldier does to the duties of the camp, satisfied to do and to bear, enjoying with a free heart the small daily pleasures which spring up like wild flowers amid daily toils and annoyances, and looking to the end of the campaign for rest and congenial scenes.

This woman has within her the powers and gifts of an artist; but her pencils and her colors are resolutely laid away, and she sits hour after hour darning her children's stockings and turning and arranging a scanty wardrobe which no ingenuity can make more than decent. She was a beautiful musician; but a musical instrument is now a thing of the past; she only lulls her baby to sleep with snatches of the songs which used to form the attraction of brilliant salons. She feels that a world of tastes and talents are lying dormant in her while she is doing the daily work of a nurse, cook, and seamstress; but she remembers who took upon Him the form of a servant before her, and she has full faith that her beautiful gifts, like bulbs sleeping under ground, shall come up and blossom again in that fair future which He has promised. Therefore it is that she has no sighs for the present or the past, — no quarrel with her life, or her lot in it; she is in harmony with herself and with all around her; her husband looks upon her as a fair daily miracle, and her children rise up and call her blessed.

But, having laid the broad foundation of faith in a better life, as the basis on which to ground our present happiness, we who are of the ideal nature must proceed to build thereon wisely.

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In the first place, we must cultivate the duty of self-patience and self-toleration. Of all the religionists and moralists who ever taught, Fénelon is the only one who has distinctly formulated the duty which a self-educator owes to himself. HAVE PATIENCE WITH YOURSELF is a direction often occurring in his writings, and a most important one it is, — because patience with ourselves is essential, if we would have patience with others. Let us look through the world. Who are the people easiest to be pleased, most sunny, most urbane, most tolerant? Are they not persons from constitution and temperament on good terms with themselves, — people who do not ask much of themselves, or try themselves severely, and who therefore are in a good humor for looking upon others? But how is a person who is conscious of a hundred daily faults and errors to have patience with himself? The question may be answered by asking, What would you say to a child who fretted, scolded, dashed down his slate, and threw his book on the floor, because he made mistakes in his arithmetic? You would say, of course, "You are but a learner; it is not to be expected that you will not make mistakes; all children do. Have patience." Just as you would talk to that child, talk to yourself. Be reconciled to a lot of inevitable imperfection; be content to try continually, and often to fail. It is the inevitable condition of human existence, and is to be accepted as such. A patient acceptance of mortifications and of defeats of our life's labor is often more efficacious for our moral advancement than even our victories.

In the next place, we must school ourselves not to look with restless desire to degrees of excellence in any department of life which circumstances evidently forbid our attaining. For a woman with plenty of money and plenty of well-trained servants to be content to have fly-specked windows, or littered rooms, or a slovenly-ordered table, is a sin. But in a woman in feeble health, encumbered with a

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flock of restless little ones, and whose circumstances allow her to keep but one servant, it may be a piece of moral heroism to shut her eyes on many such things, while securing mere essentials to life and health. It may be a virtue in her not to push neatness to such lengths as to wear herself out, or to break down her only servant, and to be resigned to have her tastes and preferences for order, cleanliness, and beauty crossed, as she would resign herself to any other affliction. No purgatory can be more severe to people of a thorough and exact nature than to be so situated that they can only half do everything they undertake; yet such is the fiery trial to which many a one is subjected. Life seems to drive them along without giving them time for anything; everything is ragged, hasty performance, of which the mind most keenly sees and feels the raggedness and hastiness. Even one thing done as it really ought to be done would be a rest and refreshment to the soul; but nowhere, in any department of its undertakings, is there any such thing to be perceived.

But there are cases where a great deal of wear and tear can be saved to the nerves by a considerate making up of one's mind as to how much in certain circumstances had better be undertaken at all. Let the circumstances of life be surveyed, the objects we are pursuing arranged and counted, and see if there are not things here and there that may be thrown out of our plans entirely, that others may be better done.

What if the whole care of expensive table luxuries, like cake and preserves, be thrown out of a housekeeper's budget, in order that the essential articles of cookery may be better prepared? What if ruffling, embroidery, and the entire department of kindred fine arts, be thrown out of her calculations, in providing for the clothing of a family? Many a feeble woman has died of too much ruffling, as she patiently sat up night after night sewing the thread of a

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precious, invaluable life into elaborate articles which her children were none the healthier or more virtuous for wearing.

Ideality is constantly ramifying and extending the department of the toilette and the needle into a world of work and worry, wherein distracted women wander up and down, seeing no end anywhere. The sewing-machine was announced as a relief to these toils; but has it proved so? We trow not. It only amounts to this, — that now there can be seventy-two tucks on each little petticoat, instead of fifteen, as before, and that twice as many garments are made up and held to be necessary as formerly. The women still sew to the limit of human endurance; and still the old proverb holds good, that woman's work is never done.

In the matter of dress, much wear and tear of spirit and nerves may be saved by not beginning to go in certain directions, well knowing that they will take us beyond our resources of time, strength, and money.

There is one word of fear in the vocabulary of women of our time which must be pondered advisedly, — Trimming. In old times a good garment was enough; nowadays a garment is nothing without trimming. Everything, from the first article that the baby wears up to the elaborate dress of the bride, must be trimmed at a rate that makes the trimming more than the original article. A dress can be made in a day, but it cannot be trimmed under two or three days. Let a faithful, conscientious woman make up her mind how much of all this burden of life she will assume, remembering wisely that there is no end to ideality in anything, and that the only way to deal with many perplexing parts of life is to leave them out altogether.

Mrs. Kirkland, in her very amusing account of her log-cabin experiences, tells us of the great disquiet and inconvenience she had in attempting to arrange in her lowly abode a most convenient clothes-press, which was manifestly

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too large for the establishment. Having labored with the cumbersome convenience for a great length of time, and with much discomfort, she at last resigned the ordering of it to a brawny-armed damsel of the forest, who began by pitching it out of doors, with the comprehensive remark, that, "where there was n't room for a thing, there was n't."

The wisdom which inspired the remark of this rustic maiden might have saved the lives of many matrons who have worn themselves out in vain attempts to make comforts and conveniences out of things which they had better have thrown out of doors altogether.

True, it requires some judgment to know what, among objects commonly pursued in any department, we really ought to reject; and it requires independence and steadiness to say, "I will not begin to try to do certain things that others are doing, and that, perhaps, they expect of me;" but there comes great leisure and quietness of spirit from the gaps thus made. When the unwieldy clothes-press was once cast out, everything in the log-cabin could have room.

A mother, who is anxiously trying to reconcile the watchful care and training of her little ones with the maintenance of fashionable calls and parties, may lose her life in the effort to do both, and do both in so imperfect a manner as never to give her a moment's peace. But on the morrow after she comes to the serious and Christian resolve, "The training of my children is all that I can do well, and henceforth it shall be my sole object," there falls into her tumultuous life a Sabbath pause of peace and leisure. It is true that she is still doing a work in which absolute perfection ever recedes; but she can make relative attainments far nearer the standard than before.

Lastly, under the head of ideality let us resolve to be satisfied with our own past doings, when at the time of do-

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ing we used all the light God gave us, and did all in our power.

The backward action of ideality is often full as tormenting as its forward and prospective movements. The moment a thing is done and over, one would think that good sense would lead us to drop it like a stone in the ocean; but the morbid idealist cannot cut loose from the past.

"Was that, after all, the best thing? Would it not have been better so or so?" And the self-tormented individual lies wakeful, during weary night-hours, revolving a thousand possibilities, and conjuring up a thousand vague perhapses. "If I had only done so now, perhaps this result would have followed, or that would not;" and as there is never any saying but that so it might have turned out, the labyrinth and the discontent are alike endless.

Now there is grand good sense in the Apostle's direction, "Forgetting the things that are behind, press forward." The idealist should charge himself as with an oath of God, to let the past alone as an accomplished fact, solely concerning himself with the inquiry, "Did I not do the best I then knew how?"

The maxim of the Quietists is, that, when we have acted according to the best light we have, we have expressed the will of God under those circumstances, — since, had it been otherwise, more and different light would have been given us; and with the will of God done by ourselves as by himself, it is our duty to be content.

Having written thus far in my article, and finding nothing more at hand to add to it, I went into the parlor to read it to Jenny and Mrs. Crowfield. I found the former engaged in the task of binding sixty yards of quilling (so I think she called it), which were absolutely necessary for perfecting a dress; and the latter was braiding one of seven little petticoats, stamped with elaborate patterns, which she had

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taken from Marianne, because that virtuous matron was ruining her eyes and health in a blind push to get them done before October.

Both approved and admired my piece, and I thought of Saint Anthony's preaching to the fishes: —

"The sermon now ended,
Each turned and descended;
The pikes went on stealing,
The eels went on eeling.
Much delighted were they,
But preferred the old way."

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